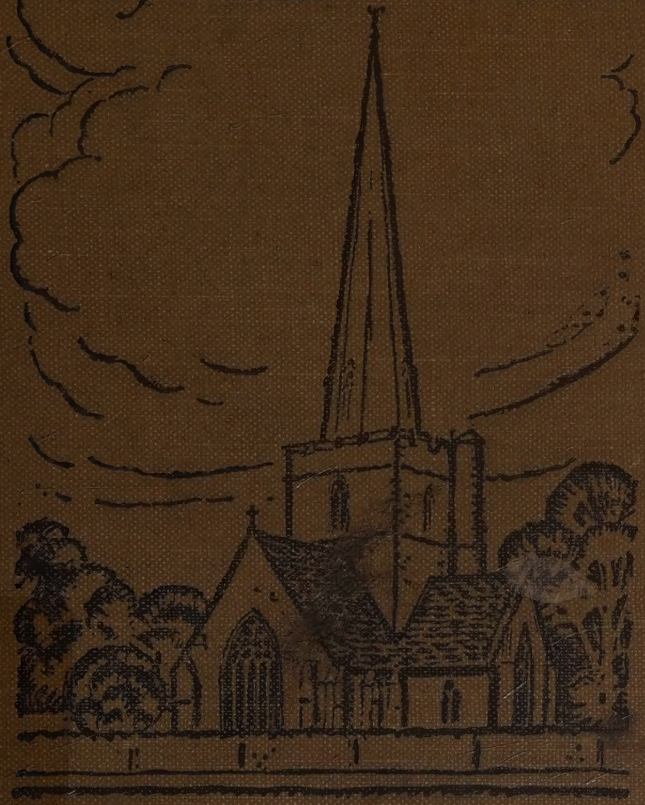
The ENGLISH PARISH CHURCH

By E.A. GREENING LAMBORN

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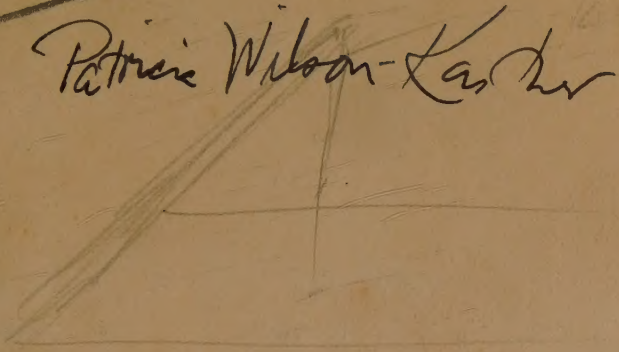

Shottesbroke, Berks., rebuilt by Sir William Trussell in 1337, possibly on the foundations of a cruciform Norman church. From the NE.

THE PARISH CHURCH

ITS ARCHITECTURE AND ANTIQUITIES

By
E. A. GREENING LAMBORN

OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS
LONDON: HUMPHREY MILFORD
1929

'This was the occasion which first engaged me in inquiries and searches after papers and records which might any way relate to my church and parish. When I had once begun to be thus inquisitive, the slow discoveries which I gradually made did not so much satisfy my mind, as they did incite it to more impatient desires.'—WHITE KENNETT, Preface to *Parochial Antiquities*.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS OXFORD
BY JOHN JOHNSON PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY

PREFACE

'When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come saying "What mean these stones?" then ye shall answer. . . .'

THE most precious inheritance of the English is their poetry and their parish churches. These are our unique possessions, our peculiar treasures; and no Englishman can take a just pride in his race and country who has not learned to appreciate and love them.

The parish church is hallowed not merely by its purpose but by its age-old associations. Thirty generations have worked upon its fabric and revealed in their work their needs in this life and their ideas of another; it has been associated not merely with the great crises of their lives, with baptism, marriage, and burial, but with the daily round, the common task, the common amusements; its bells measured out their days and called them to work and rest as well as to prayer; it was their school in childhood, their club-room in adult life, the centre of their social no less than of their religious activities; they could no more have envisaged a life without the church than a child could bear to imagine existence without its mother.

To be insensible to the mute appeal of a building so rich in human pathos is to lose an emotional stimulus, to forgo a spiritual experience, and to neglect an opportunity to enrich our own personalities by developing our powers of imaginative sympathy. For 'whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses, whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future, predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me, and from my friends, be such frigid philo-

sophy as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona.' An Englishman need not have gone so far afield for his illustrations; he could have found them in his own parish—if he had known its history as well as that of Greece.

The purpose of this little book is to reveal the wealth of interest, historical and artistic, that is to be found in an ancient parish church; to help the reader to follow the stages of its growth and to understand the motives and the methods by which that growth was determined; to make significant the features and fittings that are no longer in familiar use; and to fulfil the wistful longings of the dead by making their memorials a part of the active consciousness of the living.

All this can be done better by illustrations than by verbal description: the best book on architecture is a picture-book; and this, by the good will of the publishers, is illustrated with such liberality that it may be so described. One great advantage of the line blocks which constitute the majority of the illustrations is that they submit to the scrutiny of a reading-glass or lens, and this help to their study is strongly recommended. So, too, is the use of the index.

I have to thank my friend Mr. F. E. Howard for counsel and criticism, and Mr. J. R. H. Weaver for the photograph of Earls Barton.

LITTLEMORE. E. A. G. L.

All Saints' Day, 1928.

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I. THE PLAN

BEDE AND GILDAS tell us of Christians in Britain during the Roman Occupation, of their persecution under the Emperor Diocletian, and of the building and rebuilding of Christian churches throughout Roman-Britain. Both wrote several centuries after the event—Bede in 731, Gildas probably about 564; but the former, at least, relied on documents copied for him at Rome as well as on tradition; and vestiges of two churches of Roman date remain to confirm their testimony.

The most important of these are the foundations of a church uncovered when the site of the Roman city of Calleva (Silchester, Hants) was excavated in the nineties. Its plan, like those of Romano-Christian churches still extant in Italy and Syria, has some features in common with the basilicas or public halls of Roman cities which were formerly supposed to have served as models for the early Christian architects. Although this, and a more recent theory, which derives it from the domestic hall where the early Christian household would have assembled for worship, are now discredited the plan is usually called the basilican. Whatever its origin its essential features are a semicircular apse for the altar and its priests, and a rectangular hall (usually with a portico at the end) for the congregation; the one is still represented by the chancel, the other by the nave (Fig. 1). But indeed this twofold division may at first have been unpremeditated. It is suggested by Mr. G. Gilbert Scott that the earliest

Christian church was simply a small rectangular chamber, representing the room in a disciple's house in which the converts of the first and second centuries used to meet, having a window over the altar at one end and a doorway at the other. Examples of this primitive plan still exist in Ireland,[1] the most perfect being the oratory at Dingle. The congregation probably assembled outside the shrine; in any case but few could enter. The next step therefore was to add a second small room for the altar, entered by a doorway through the end wall, and to admit the congregation to the original chamber. Thus a primitive nave and chancel were formed; but the latter was a rectangle, not an apse; and the plan contained, what the basilican did not, the germ of a chancel arch in the doorway between the two chambers—though the word chancel itself is derived from the screens (Latin *cancelli*) that enclosed a space in front of the apse which served as a choir for the singers. This earlier plan was eventually to determine the lay-out of churches great and small throughout the Middle Ages in Great Britain.

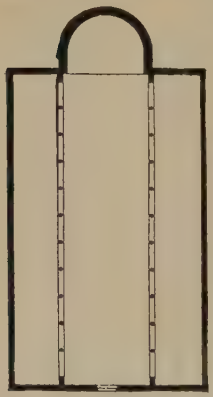


FIG. 1. Plan of a basilica, with semicircular apse for the altar and rectangular hall for worshippers. A space in front of the apse would be railed off for the choir.

[1] The foundations of others exist in Cornwall. Many small Welsh churches retain their early plan though their fabrics have been rebuilt at later periods.

It is possible that it was represented in Roman Britain by the existing chancel of the church of St. Martin at Canterbury, 'built' as Bede records 'whilst the Romans were still in the island', and afterwards

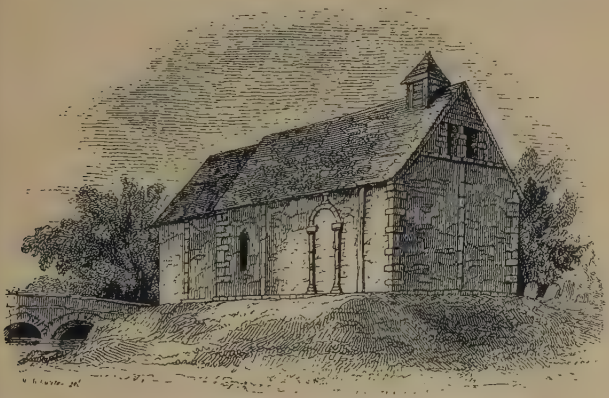


FIG. 2. An Anglo-Saxon church, Corhampton, on the Celtic plan of rectangular nave and chancel, showing pilaster strips and long-and-short work characteristic of the eleventh century. Cf. Pls. II, V.

used as an oratory by Bertha, the Christian wife of Ethelbert of Kent. Part of its walls are of Roman brick, and the foundations, at least, of Romano-British workmanship.

If Bede and Gildas can be trusted these churches were but two out of many; no traces of others, however, have survived the Anglo-Saxon invasion. But of churches built by the English after their conversion there are numerous vestiges throughout the country.

The plan of the majority of these is the double rectangle of the primitive type common in Ireland; and this

has therefore been called the Celtic plan. Some authorities, however, now hold that, like the basilican, it came directly from the Continent, as the masons who built the earliest Anglo-Saxon churches certainly did. Of churches on the basilican plan reintroduced by Augustine, Brixworth is the earliest and Wing the latest and most complete example now remaining, though foundations and ruins of others exist—mostly in the neighbourhood of Canterbury. But of churches of the Celtic type there are many more early examples, of which Escomb, Jarrow, Monkwearmouth, Corbridge, Repton, Bradford on Avon and Britford are among the most interesting. The far more numerous churches of the late Anglo-Saxon period are all originally of the rectangular, aisle-less type. Coln Rogers is the most perfect example. (Pl. II.)

The first addition made to the plan was a porch protecting the entrance; Monkwearmouth has a good example. After the Danish inroads a western tower superseded the porch, being sometimes, as at Monkwearmouth, built over it, and besides fulfilling the same function, housed the bells and served as a landmark and possibly as a refuge. The design of the Saxon tower was quite unlike any of later date; it had no turret and newel stair, its area was always small, and its proportions were tall and slim, quite different from those of Norman towers which were usually but two cubes high and often less.

Next, porch-like projections were built out north and south of the nave, the walls of which were pierced with archways opening into them, as in the early church at Britford near Salisbury and at Bradford-on-Avon. But

as the western entrance remained the principal, if not the only, one during the Saxon period, these lateral chambers were probably used as chapels to contain the two side altars that must otherwise have stood in the nave on either side of the chancel arch. They seem to have suggested to the later Saxon builders the idea of a central tower with chapels opening out of it to north and south, which is found at Dover Castle and at Breamore, Hants.

Some Saxon churches like the early basilicas at Rome had crypts below the altar, which were perhaps symbolical of the catacombs in which the fathers of the Church were buried, and which were used to safeguard the holy relics that every church aspired to possess. Round the crypt ran a processional pathway, entered by two openings in the nave floor, from which the worshippers in making the circuit could view and venerate the relics. Hexham has the earliest, and Wing the most complete example.

The Normans had their own ideas of church building, and they destroyed a large number of earlier churches in order to replace them by new ones. They favoured the central tower, and they were skilful enough to build it not upon walls pierced with openings in the Saxon manner but upon piers and arches. They also reintroduced the apse of the basilican plan, though they built, too, many chancels of the rectangular type, but much wider in proportion to their length and height than the Saxon churches were—a typical Saxon chancel suggests the proportions of a grave. But their great contribution to English church-planning was the addition of aisles to the nave of the large church—the small

DESCRIPTION OF PLATE II

The long-and-short work of the pilaster-strips and of the quoins at the angle of the nave shows that the walls are of the eleventh century. Lancet-lights replaced the original windows [1] in the thirteenth century and were themselves superseded in the nave by the present windows in the fifteenth century, when the low-arched priest's door was inserted in the chancel wall, destroying the lower part of a pilaster-strip.

[1] Except one in the north wall of the chancel.

II. COLN ROGERS, GLOS. FROM THE SOUTH

one continued to be built on the simple Celtic plan throughout the Middle Ages, except that the western entrance was superseded by doorways north and south of the nave and was reserved for processional purposes only.

All the larger basilican churches of the Continent had aisles, for as they were roofed with timber it was not possible to get beams long enough to span a church of considerable breadth; two rows of arches were therefore built down the length of the building, and upon these walls were raised, standing as it were upon legs, to support the roof over the middle portion; the sides were then covered by lean-to roofs resting upon the outer and leaning against the inner, arch-borne walls which were pierced by high window-openings to lessen the weight upon the arches no less than to admit light. The Saxon architects had sometimes attempted the same thing, but Wing and Brixworth are the only remaining examples of their success in accomplishing it, and at Brixworth the aisles have been destroyed.

But the Norman aisle was not only a device to facilitate the roofing of a wide nave; it was designed also to provide a path for processions round the building, and a means by which worshippers could reach any part of the church without disturbing those already in their places.

The addition of an aisle was also at once seen to be obviously the readiest means of enlarging an existing church by piercing its nave walls with arches and building lower walls parallel with them to carry a lean-to roof. So many Saxon churches on the Celtic plan were extended laterally in this way. Bibury, Glos., is a notable example (Pl. V).

The central tower offered another means of increasing the size of a church and providing space for side altars in transepts built to north and south of it. This produced the cruciform plan which became the rule in all large churches—though after the twelfth century the western tower again became general in the smaller ones. By piercing the eastern walls of the transepts chapels could be built out parallel with the chancel, and this was often done, e.g. at Uffington and Cholsey, Berks.; for to provide an altar and an endowment for a priest to say masses at it was the surest means of securing the soul's welfare after death; and therefore all who could afford it were ready to enlarge their parish church at any available point.

Developments of ritual in the thirteenth century led to a general movement for the enlargement of the chancels so as to provide more space for the choir and for ceremonial processions. The obvious plan was to extend the church eastwards by building a new sanctuary and using the original chancel for a choir, but often at the same time the chancel walls were pierced and aisles or chapels built north or south, each with its side altar at which masses could be said for the souls of the founders, who were not only individual rich men but guilds or, as we should now call them, clubs or associations of traders or craftsmen organized for the welfare of their members in the next world as well as in this one. Sometimes a vestry would be built; but this, too, as its piscina remains to show, was also a chapel with its altar. By the end of the Middle Ages most parish churches, in addition to the High Altar at the east end, had half a dozen side altars in various chapels at which masses were daily said.

But by the end of the Middle Ages, when a church was to be built or rebuilt its designers planned it so as to exhibit to full advantage the great screen between nave and chancel which had then become the most imposing object in the building. They therefore eschewed a central tower and even the chancel arch, and, instead of building transepts, carried the nave aisles eastward to overlap the chancel. The plan thus finally arrived at is therefore practically a reversion to that of the early basilica except that a square sanctuary takes the place of the apse. In such a church the chapels are not excrescences each under its own roof but are enclosures like great pews [1] formed by screening off a bay of an aisle. The screens have been destroyed in most churches but have left their traces on the caps and bases of the columns cut to receive the ends of their beams.

At the time of the Reformation therefore the builder's ideal plan was practically identical with our own: it was that of a great rectangular hall with a small eastward projection. But the aims which led him to it were very different from ours; we need a large auditorium from every part of which the preacher and the priest at prayer can be heard and seen; his aim was to ensure that from every point in the church the screen with its Rood and loft for organs and singers, the High Altar and some at least of the side altars should be in full view. For from the sixth century to the sixteenth a church was primarily a shelter for altars; and going

[1] After the Reformation many of them were actually used as pews by the descendants of their founders and thus provided models for the horse-box pews of the Jacobean squires.

to church meant seeing and hearing the Sacrifice of the Mass, and being reminded of the Event it commemorated.

II. THE ROOF

BUT IN our climate, at least, a shelter means more than the enclosing walls with the lay-out of which we have so far been concerned. The parts of a church have not only to be screened but covered. The most obvious and the earliest method is to rest a roof upon the walls as the lid rests upon a box. But while walls can be built of any kind of stone the space between them can only be thus bridged by stones of a length difficult to handle and even more difficult to procure. In Egypt the thing was done, but elsewhere the builders had to fall back upon a wooden lid,[1] since timber could more readily be obtained in lengths of adequate span.

Merely to lay planks from wall to wall, however, would produce a flat roof upon which rain would collect. The lid was therefore constructed as a rigid rectangular framework with sloping sides, prevented from 'spreading' or altering its shape by means of horizontal tie-beams keeping its long sides parallel. The long sides, 'the wall-plates', of this framework, rested upon the flat tops of the walls; its sloping sides, the rafters, were covered externally with thatch, tiles,

[1] A good many Anglo-Saxon churches were built entirely of wood. Thus Dunstan 'apud Magaveldam (Mayfield) sicut in aliis hospitiorum suorum locis, ligneam ecclesiam fabricavit'; and Bede records the building of churches 'non de lapide, sed de robore secto'—of split oaks. An example of the early eleventh century still exists at Greenstead, Essex.

shingles, or in the later Middle Ages, sheets of lead, and internally with boards. It lay as a dead weight upon the walls—so long as its tie-beams held, and received from them support along the whole length of its wall-plates.[1] Its weakness was the liability of timber to decay and, still more, its inflammability.

It was the second weakness that led the builders from the earliest times to seek a means of constructing a stone roof or at least an inner shell of stone to lessen the risks from fire—from heaven in the form of lightning, from men in time of war. The first step towards the solution of their problem was taken when some early inventive genius, of an unknown race and country, devised a means of bridging the head of a doorway, not by spanning it with a long stone or beam, but by fitting stones together in a curve where their mutual pressure kept them from falling out of their places.

But an arch has no great advantage over a lintel unless the space to be bridged is a wide one; and then its construction presents two serious difficulties, the need to provide first a great timber framework or centring on which to support the voussoirs (arch-stones) until all are in place, and secondly an adequate abutment to prevent the arch from flattening out by pushing aside its supports. The danger can be illustrated simply and effectively by bending a cane and placing it between two books on a table; unless the books are fairly heavy the cane will push them farther apart in the effort to straighten out. More books laid upon the others will

[1] After the invention of the Gothic buttress roofs were often constructed of timber arches so as to dispense with tie-beams, which are very costly except for narrow spans.

check this tendency;[1] but pressure upon the top of the curve will set them moving again until a weight equal to it is placed at the ends of the cane.

The arch therefore presented the early builders with more serious problems than it solved; and though it was known and used in many lands for centuries before the Christian era it was employed only in small openings or below the ground level where the surrounding earth provided an immovable abutment.

The Roman engineers of the second century B. C. were the first to devise a system of building in which the arch with perfect stability and safety took the place of beam and lintel in every part of the structure, and above all, in the roof. They realized, for example, that if two equal arches spring from a common point their thrusts are neutralized and converted into a dead weight, and that therefore the mass of the support at this point is immaterial, so long as it is solid enough to resist compression. And so they carried their aqueducts across country for scores of miles upon hundreds of arches, the thrusts of each being met by those of its fellows on either side of it. Thus arch fought arch all down the line, the thrusts of the end ones being annihilated by a solid weight of masonry.

But the most important invention of the Roman architect was the cross vault, which is indeed the most far-reaching discovery that has been made in the history of architecture. It came as the result of experimenting with arched tunnels or barrel vaults (which are simply

[1] The same thing could be done by tying the ends of the cane together, and in modern architecture this is sometimes done with the feet of arches by using iron tie-rods.

long archways) intersecting at right angles; and it showed that any square space could be roofed by sections of a barrel vault, carried upon arches springing from its corners, and therefore that any rectangular area might,

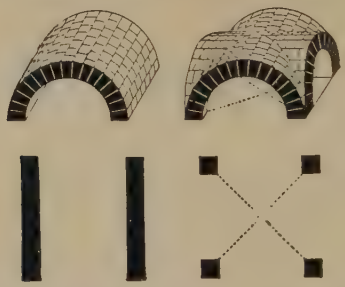


FIG. 3. Barrel or tunnel vault and cross or groined vault formed by the intersection of two tunnels. The lines of intersection are known as groins. Cf. Fig. 5.

by division into squares, be roofed by a series of cross vaults supported by columns at their corners (Fig. 3).

The cross, or quadripartite vault is the essential feature alike of Roman architecture and of that imitation of it which was developed by the barbarians of western Europe and is known as Romanesque. It may be objected that among all our examples of Saxon Romanesque there is not a single vaulted building above ground, and that the great majority of Norman Romanesque churches are also without vaults. Nevertheless, the ideal of every medieval architect was a vaulted building; wherever the skill, and the centring, was available, as in the case of monasteries and cathedrals, this ideal was achieved with more or less completeness; and the parochial builders who could not raise a vault

yet copied the arches whose essential function is to support one, though lintels in doorways and window-heads would have served their purpose equally well.

So it happens that not the cross vault but its semi-

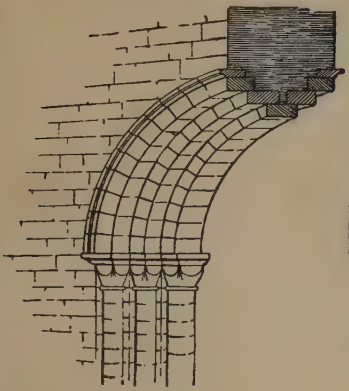


FIG. 4.

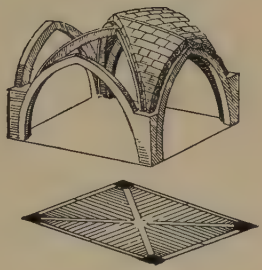


FIG. 5.

FIG. 4. Showing Norman method of constructing an arch in successive rings or orders, each supported by a shaft recessed in the jambs.
FIG. 5. Gothic vault, built up on a skeleton of pointed arches of varying span but equal height.

circular arch is the mark by which most of our Romanesque work is distinguished.

The Saxon arches are nearest to the Roman model; sometimes indeed as at Escomb they are actually Roman work rebuilt in a new position; always (except in windows where a splay is necessary to allow the light to spread) they are cut straight through the wall like a tunnel, in the Roman manner (Pl. V b). The Norman method was very different: to save centring they built their arches in successive rings one above another, each

wider than the last, using centring only for the first and narrowest, upon which the others were built up (Figs. 4, 6); and they usually set nook-shafts in the jambs to support each ring or 'order' of the arch.[1] This recessing gave their arches a richly elaborate effect which was increased by decorative carving on the edges of the orders and by ornamenting the caps of the nook-shafts with scallops (Figs. 29, 31) or even with naturalistic carving of birds and beasts. So the Norman architect, like Wordsworth's Happy Warrior, 'turned his necessity to glorious gain'.

This effort to economize centring, in days when all shaping must be done by hand and by means of the axe alone, had still more important results: it led the late eleventh-century builders to experiment in making a cross vault not as in the Roman manner with complete centring but by constructing a skeleton of arches, like the ribs of an umbrella, and then filling in the webs between them one by one, using for each the same set of centring (Figs. 5, 7). The device, perhaps invented to ceil the aisles at Durham in 1095, so simplified the construction of cross vaults that scores of Norman towers and square chancels are to this day provided with stone ceilings, and every Norman cathedral and abbey church has its aisles vaulted by this means.

This method also revealed very clearly the important

[1] One or two late Saxon churches, e.g. Hadstock, Essex, have rude shafts in the door-jambs. These belong to the Confessor's reign and are crude reflections of the work of his Norman masons at Westminster where from about 1055 he was building an abbey church on the model of that at Jumièges. The very interesting door at Hadstock, with its ironwork, is contemporary, and is thus the oldest piece of carpentry in England.

fact that the thrusts of a cross vault were concentrated at the angles from which the skeleton arches sprang, and that if adequate abutment were provided at these points

Fig. 6. Porchester church, twelfth century, showing Norman windows and door and shallow buttresses at the angles of nave and transept.

the rest of the walling might be built light and thin without risk to stability and with a great saving of material. So the buttress came into visible existence, in Norman work a pilaster (Figs. 6, 8 and Pls. III, VI), a mere thickening of the wall at a point where pressure was

concentrated, but afterwards a projecting mass of masonry designed to relieve the walls of their original function of supporting the roof and so to convert them simply into screens against the weather, which might be, and in fact eventually became, great sheets of painted glass.

With the emergence of the buttress as the essential factor in the stability of the building, the Norman style passed into the Gothic, the earliest development of which was named by those who would appear to have studied only English examples, the Early English Style.

III. THE BUTTRESS

BY THOSE who observe merely the details and not the constructive principles of a building Gothic is supposed to be any system of architecture that employs the pointed arch. But the pointed arch was used quite early in Norman work, and the round one persisted all through the Gothic period, though of course the one was exceptional before and the other after the reign of Henry II.

The pointed arch, like the round, was of prehistoric origin—indeed the first man who improvised a rude compass to strike a round arch must, by the intersection of equal arcs, have struck pointed ones too (Fig. 54)—but it had been neglected for centuries after its invention. It is probable that crusaders observed it in Saracenic building and realized its value in solving the great problem of Romanesque architecture, how to construct a high vault above an aisled nave. This had been found practically impossible by means of round arches alone, for, as the nave was wider than the aisle, its bays, the area defined by the aisle pillars, were oblong, and therefore could not be roofed by square

cross vaults, which require four arches of equal height. Semicircular arches can of course rise to only half their

Fig. 7. Construction of a Gothic high vault over an aisled nave by means of a skeleton of arches supported by flying buttresses. Note lean-to timber roof of aisle and tie-beam roof over nave vault.

span: the crowns of the narrow side arches would therefore fall far below those of the wide transverse ones across the nave. A pointed arch, however, can be

brought to a height independent of its span; by making the narrow arches lofty and sinking the wide ones all could be brought to the same level in the crown of the vault (Figs. 5, 7). And thus the pointed arch solved the great problem of the Romanesque builders and in so doing improved their system out of existence.

For, as is the way with problems, the solution confronted the builders with a fresh one: how to maintain the stability of their new construction? The nave walls could not be thickened at the points where the arch-thrusts were received, for they were themselves carried upon the row of arches below them. Some unknown architect of France, where the pointed vault earliest developed, hit upon the plan of building a tall buttress outside the aisle wall, opposite the point where the high-vault thrusts were concentrated, and transmitting them to it by means of a bar of stone, as a bulging wall is shored up by a prop—except that the flying buttress, as the bar is called, takes off not from the ground but from the summit of a tall mass of masonry (Fig. 7).

The early Gothic buttresses, like the flat Norman pilasters from which they had developed, tended to be wide in proportion to their projection (Figs. 6, 8, 9). Throughout the Gothic period their depth increased until in the fifteenth century it was often double or treble their width, for this shape is obviously the most effective in resisting outward thrusts, and also increases the area of wall available for windows (Figs. 10, 11, 47). Since the essential quality in a buttress is weight the pinnacle was soon invented to increase its mass and at the same time to throw off the wet and beautify the sky-line of the building.

It is not impossible that in the pinnacle we may see the germ of that most impressive of all Gothic inven-

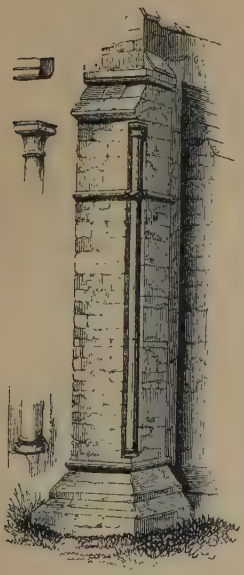


Fig. 8.

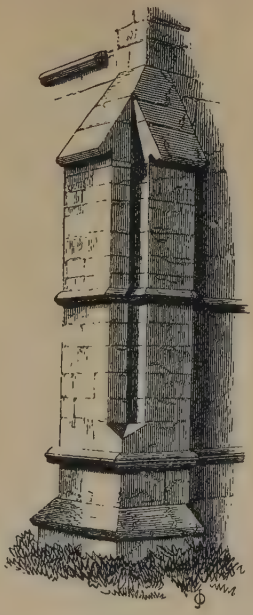


Fig. 9.

Fig. 8. Late Norman corner buttress with angle shaft having cap with square abacus and flattened roll at base. *c.* 1160.
Fig. 9. Early Gothic coupled buttress of slight projection. *c.* 1200.

tions, the spire; which, both structurally and artistically, is merely a logical development of the pinnacle, and appears almost simultaneously with it, as if the one

device had suggested the other.[1] Structurally its function

FIG. 10.

FIG. 11.

FIG. 10. Decorated buttress with niche and pinnacle, square on plan. *c.* 1330. Cf. Pl. VIII.

FIG. 11. Perpendicular buttress of deep projection with panelled surface and of several stages. *c.* 1450. Cf. Fig. 47.

is to weight the tower against the thrusts of the arches that abut upon it; its weight is set in balance against

[1] The usually accepted origin of the spire is in the pyramidal roof of the Romanesque towers.

that of the walls carried by the arches. Artistically it at once enriches the sky-line of the building, serves as a point round which its parts group themselves, and emphasizes the monumental character of the structure as a building raised not merely for the service but for the glory of God.

The earliest spires of the thirteenth century were of the broach type, four of their faces rising from the outer edges of the tower walls; later examples usually spring from the inner edges of the walls, thus leaving room for a parapeted walk round the base from which ladders may be run up or cradles slung when repairs are necessary. Obviously, too, this device simplified the building of a spire, since the necessary scaffolding could be set up on the top of the tower walls instead of being built up all the way from the ground level (Frontispiece).

A good many of our Norman towers, e.g. Castor and Cassington, have been given an upper stage, to serve as the base of a spire, by the architects of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Pl. IV).

The early Gothic buttress of slight projection was of uniform depth, like a flat, bold pilaster; but as its depth increased it was built in diminishing stages, two or three in the thirteenth century, three or four in the fourteenth, and even more in the fifteenth. Each stage sloped sharply into the next so that the rain might be thrown off and prevented from soaking into the stonework. The earlier buttresses were set in pairs at the angles of the building, but after the thirteenth century they are often built diagonally at the corner, so that only one is needed (Figs. 9, 13, Pl. VIII).

Parish churches are seldom provided with vaults, for

the setting out, in spite of the simplified method of skeleton arches, required considerable skill and experience. Moreover in the climate of western Europe a vault requires protection from the weather on its

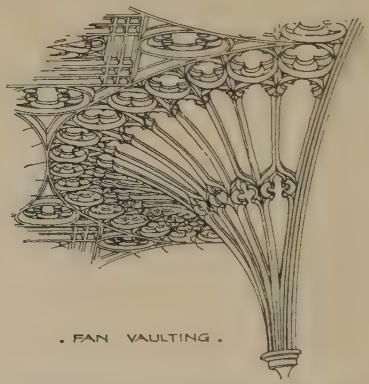


Fig. 12. Cone of fan-tracery vault, showing lierne ribs. *c.* 1450.

external face, and therefore timber roofs were still necessary. Few parishes could afford the luxury of a duplicate roof. But the cathedrals could, and in them the skeletal method continued to develop until in the fourteenth century the vault became a net-work of light arches bridged across by lierne ribs so that the filling-in could be done with flat stones without centring; and then the vaulting of a porch or chapel presented little difficulty even to the village masons. The junction of the arch-ribs was greatly simplified by the invention of the boss, a block of stone into which their ends fitted, which gave scope to the carver as well as convenience to the mason (Fig. 7).

Finally, in the latter half of the fourteenth century the invention of fan-vaulting, in which sections of an incurved cone or 'trumpet' are poised against each other, enabled the builder to construct a vault by fitting its panels together without any skeleton of arches, though ribs, structurally useless, were still cut upon the sections of the cone, for the enrichment of the surface and to suggest the lines of pressure (Fig. 12).

The fan-vault with its thin, light panelling exercised little thrust, and so would have enabled the builders to reduce the projection of the enormous and numerous buttresses which are so prominent a feature in early Gothic that looking at some of our cathedrals one can hardly see the church for its supports.[1] Yet the new invention did not become really popular until the Reformation and the end of Gothic were in sight; and it never became a common feature in parish churches except in porches and towers.

IV. THE WINDOWS AND DOORWAYS

BUT IF the high vault was rare in the parish church its concomitants, the pointed arch and the buttress, soon became universal; for though in the absence of a vault neither is indispensable yet the one allowed of far greater variety in the proportions of doorways and windows, and the other enabled walls to be constructed more strongly with less material.[2]

[1] It must be remembered, however, that to monastic builders the interior effect was the great thing aimed at.

[2] Buttresses also enabled the builder to dispense with tie-beams in the construction of the roof, by resisting the thrusts of timber arches.

The arch most commonly used in the first century of Gothic, that is from the time of Richard to that of Edward I, the Early English period, was of an acutely

FIG. 13. Stanton Harcourt church, showing Early English lancet windows with hood-moulds, and coupled buttresses, *c.* 1220; and a central Norman tower with a fourteenth-century upper stage.

pointed form, its radius being seldom less than its span and sometimes much greater. It gave the windows the long, narrow shape of lancets, and in order that these might admit adequate light they were widely splayed internally and set fairly close together in the walls (Figs. 13, 14). In gable ends they were usually grouped

in pairs or triplets with a little arched projecting ridge of stone above them, a string-course or hood-mould, to throw off the wet; quite early in the thirteenth century

FIG. 14. Lancet window, splayed internally, with hood-mould or drip-stone above the arch and string-course below. *c.* 1220.

it became the practice to pierce the triangular spaces between the hood-mould and the lancet heads with circular openings (Fig. 16). This was the origin of tracery, a pattern-work of openings in the head of a

window. By the middle of the century the early 'plate-tracery' of pierced openings had been completely superseded by a new method of constructing a single arched opening, filling its head with a pattern of curved stone bars, and dividing its lower part vertically into lancet lights by means of long stone mullions (Fig. 15). Before the end of the century the single lancet had been abandoned altogether in favour of the traceried window, and often the small openings in earlier buildings were enlarged so that the new tracery might be inserted. With the lancet went the acutely pointed arch. The most popular form was now equilateral; but width was obtained in many windows by giving the heads a segmental curve. In the middle of the fourteenth century the four-centred arch was transferred from the fan-vault to which it was essential into the heads of the windows, where it remained until the end (Fig. 47).

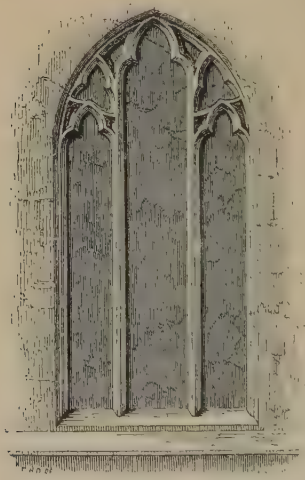


FIG. 15. Early bar-tracery of simple geometrical design. *c.* 1260.

The early tracery was of a simple geometrical form, consisting mainly of quatrefoiled circles and trefoiled triangles above a pair or triplet of mullioned lancet lights (Figs. 17, 51, Pl. VII). But during the time of the first

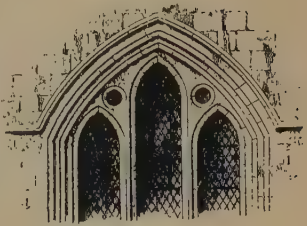
Bottesford

Sandwich

Cowley

Temple Church

Carlisle 1



Carlisle 2

FIG. 16. Grouped lancet lights showing the origin of window-tracery in the openings pierced in the spandrels between the window-heads and the hood-mould.

two Edwards windows increased greatly in size and tracery in complexity, the openings assuming a variety of shapes and sizes that must have presented grave diffi-

FIG. 17. FIG. 18.

FIG. 17. Decorated or curvilinear tracery of geometrical type. *c.* 1300.

FIG. 18. Decorated tracery, 'flowing' type, *c.* 1360. Two of the mullions run up to the head of the arch in the manner characteristic of the succeeding style.

culties to the glazier who had to fill them with pictures in coloured glass (Figs. 18, 19, 20, Pls. VI, VIII). Early in the reign of Edward III a reaction set in, well illustrated at Gloucester in the reconstruction of the choir begun in

1337, for which the glaziers were at least partly responsible; and by the end of the reign the Decorated or curvilinear tracery was everywhere giving place to the Perpen-

FIG. 19.

FIG. 20.

FIG. 19. Decorated flowing tracery of the pattern known as reticulated. *c.* 1340.

FIG. 20. Late Decorated tracery of flamboyant type, *c.* 1360. In France this persisted during the English Perpendicular period.

dicular or rectilinear form, in which the main mullions often ran straight through from the sill to the arch, and shorter vertical and horizontal bars divided the head into panels conveniently shaped to receive a stained glass

portrait (Fig. 21). At the same time, by the general adoption of the four-centred arch, window heads widened and their haunches rose until little curve was left in their

FIG. 21. Perpendicular or rectilinear tracery, in which the vertical line predominates. *c.* 1400. The wide, shallow casement moulding running round the arch and jambs is characteristic of the style.

arches, and many were simply lintels supported by the mullions (Pls. III, VI). So at the beginning of the fifteenth century the typical window had, as Ruskin scornfully said, the form of a gridiron. Nevertheless it was perfectly adapted to its purpose of composing a picture in coloured glass; it is only when its glass is gone that it loses by con-

trast with the varied curves of Decorated tracery; and even so, what it lacks in variety of line it gains in variety of gradation and subordination of the thickness of its framework, from the heavy weight-bearing mullions to the slight vertical members of the upper lights.

It is often argued nowadays that only in France did Gothic reach its full development, because only there did the vaulted roof which brought it into existence give significance to the details by its presence in every building. It is true that most of our parish churches, unlike those of France, lack the stone ceiling which is the *raison d'être* of most of their details; but it is also true that the invention of the fan-vault, which is the final and perfect solution of the vaulting problem and the logical conclusion of all the earlier experiments, was reached in England alone; and that the Perpendicular window which is equally the inevitable conclusion of a system of screen-walls and buttresses is also a purely English development. For Gothic is essentially a system which substitutes the buttress for the wall; it is indeed nothing else than the construction of a stone lantern; and the window extending from one buttress to the next is the form proper to it. But such a window must be designed to resist an enormous wind-pressure, and therefore its principal mullions must be firmly held at either end and must be stayed and strengthened by transoms crossing from jamb to jamb. We are not such an illogical people as we sometimes suppose.

It is only the raw amateur, ignorant of constructive technique, who supposes that because Perpendicular detail has not the naïvety, naturalness, and variety of earlier work it must be a decadent stage of Gothic. For

Gothic construction was progressive to the last, and was never more alive and vigorous than when it was suddenly interrupted by the Reformation.

FIG. 22. Early English doorway, *c.* 1220, showing deeply shadowed mouldings and detached jamb-shafts with foliaged caps supporting the orders of the arch. Cf. Figs. 38, 51. The basement-course shows that the wall is later than the doorway, and thus that the aisle has been widened.

Doorways changed less than windows throughout the Gothic period, but their shapes followed a similar course, the acutely arched head of the thirteenth century sinking through the fourteenth to the wide, flat arch characteristic of the fifteenth. For a century or more they continued to be recessed in orders in the Norman manner,

often with nook-shafts (Fig. 22); but in the fourteenth century half-columns carved on the jambs took the place of the shafts which, in the next century, dis-

FIG. 23. Perpendicular doorway, *c.* 1425. The head is set in a square frame or label, panels are sunk in the spandrels, the mouldings are shallow and angular, the casement hollow is repeated between the suites of mouldings, and the bases of the engaged shafts are of the pedestal type.

appeared altogether except in large and elaborate doorways (Figs. 23, 53).

The typical Perpendicular door may be at once recognized by having its flat-arched head set in a square hood-mould or ' label ', the corners of which are filled with quatrefoiled sunk circles or with shields of arms, with which, too, the labels often end (Fig. 23, Pls. III, IV).

A similar change took place in the chancel arch which in early Gothic as in Norman work has often shafts in the jambs to carry the orders of the arch, and in the Decorated period a half-column, while in Perpendicular the arch is either omitted or, being hidden by the screen and rood, has usually neither mouldings nor columns.

In the nave arcades some traces of the Norman invention of the recessed arch remained until the end; but as walls became thinner the device ceased to have any practical value in economizing centring. The orders are therefore more clearly marked in Norman and early Gothic than in later arcades.

It should be remembered that at all periods the readiest plan of supporting the arch was a simple cylindrical or hexagonal column with a cap upon which the orders stopped; and in the simpler churches this arrangement was universally adopted as a substitute for the more logical compound pier.

V. THE IMITATIVE STYLES

THE REFORMATION put an end to church-building for almost two centuries, until the growth of towns made necessary the creation of new parishes. Our old parish churches are therefore almost entirely a legacy of the Middle Ages. But occasionally it was found necessary in the eighteenth century to rebuild a village church, and there are even a few examples of seventeenth-century date, the most notable being that at Staunton Harold, Leicestershire, built by a squire who, as an inscription over the entrance records, 'did this best of

things in the worst of times and hoped them in the most calamitous'—the date is 1653. The work so exactly

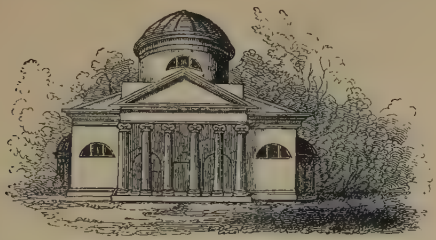


FIG. 24. Nuneham. An eighteenth-century church, 1764, in the Classic or Palladian style, with dome and pediment supported by Ionic columns.

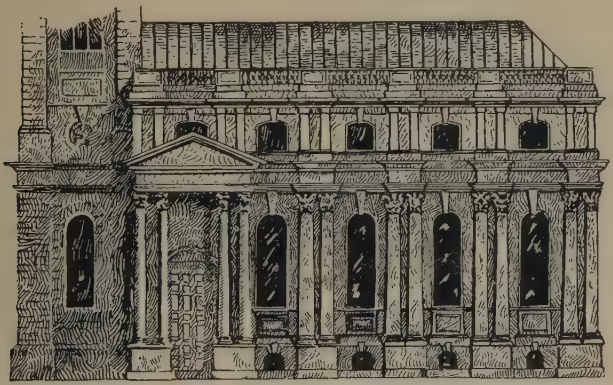


FIG. 25. All Saints, Oxford, *c.* 1710. Designed by Aldrich in the Classic style; showing Corinthian columns, a balustrade, and projecting keystones in the heads of the arches.

reproduces the style of the fifteenth century that but for the mouldings, which show the influence of Renaissance models, it would be difficult to believe that the

DESCRIPTION OF PLATE III

The 'CR' in the pediment of the porch refers to Charles I, in whose reign the church was rebuilt. But the flat buttress with the short length of string-course above it shows that the west wall at least was rebuilt on a Norman base. The windows and strings are of late Gothic type, but the porch, though contemporary, is of pure Renaissance style with classic pediment and mouldings and elliptical arch in the doorway. Elliptical curves distinguish classic from Gothic mouldings.

(The font is contemporary with and confirms the evidence of the buttress.)

III. SHRIVENHAM, BERKS. WEST WALL

inscription refers to the whole building. But, as other examples show—St. John's Church, Leeds, Carlton Husthwaite, Yorks., and Bletchley in Bucks., for instance, the Gothic tradition was still very much alive even in the seventeenth century (Pl. III).

The building of St. Paul's after the Great Fire, if it did not kill it, at least put it to sleep. Wren's work, based ultimately on the Roman temples and basilicas, became the model for the eighteenth-century church-builder; and so the parish church of that date may be instantly recognized by its apse, its small dome, and its columns, Doric, Ionic, or Corinthian, crude imitations, *longo intervallo*, of those which supported the roof of the Greek temple (Fig. 24). Or, if it is too modest to possess any of these things, its round unrecessed arches will exhibit in their crowns the wedge-shaped, boldly projecting keystone. And only the altar furniture will distinguish it from the nonconformist chapel next door (Fig. 25).

By the middle of the century, when Tetbury church was rebuilt, the Gothic imitation had begun; but it had little occasion to manifest itself until the growth of the factory system made the provision of new town churches an urgent necessity in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Then it broke out like an epidemic, and its results are with us yet; not only in hideous new churches in sordid streets but, worse still, in incongruous and unnecessary additions and alterations to old churches that had survived the zeal of the Puritan and the neglect of the pluralist to fall victim to the stupidity of the restorer, who supposed that workmen who had lost not merely the religion of the Middle Age but its traditions

of craftsmanship, and above all its freedom of each man to do his job in his own way, could reproduce at the command of an architect, who could not handle a tool, the visible manifestation of the medieval spirit, the English parish church.

VI. ORNAMENT

FOR THOSE visitors to our ancient churches who wish to know no more of the history of a building than the dates of its various parts the mouldings and enrichments of the arch and column afford the safest and easiest guide.

The Anglo-Saxons used few mouldings, for they rarely attempted to build columns, and so the great majority of their arches are in doorways and chancels; these are usually very small and being without orders afford little surface for mouldings; their shape is outlined by thin slabs set edgeways into the wall, with their narrow, square edges boldly projecting to form a frame running continuously round arch and jambs (Pl. V b). They spring from enormously massive impost stones which seldom have their lower edges chamfered off to form a slanting surface as in Norman work, but are usually relieved by two pairs of parallel grooved lines running horizontally round them. These parallel grooves are found in pairs also upon the baluster shafts, which stand on the centre of the sill (and are therefore sometimes called mid-wall shafts) to support the double arches of Anglo-Saxon belfry windows (Figs. 26, 27). Other windows, intended to be glazed or perhaps closed by horn lattices, are set back deeply into the wall in late Saxon churches or, in the few early examples are very

small; and in both are quite without ornamentation. Windows with triangular heads occur at Deerhurst, Barton on Humber, and Herringfleet; and at Escomb the lintelled head is found.

The faces of Anglo-Saxon towers (all of which probably belong to the tenth and eleventh centuries) and of the contemporary walls, e.g. in the almost unaltered church of Coln Rogers (Pl. II), are relieved by narrow bands of dressed stone, pilaster-strips, which, like the quoins, are formed of 'long-and-short work' in which large, squared stones with their longer axes vertical alternate with smaller ones laid flat (Fig. 27). Neither of these features occurs in the earlier work (which is often to be distinguished by the presence of Roman materials reused); they are, however, characteristic of the Rhenish churches of Germany, from which they were probably derived; for the Danish occupation of the French coast had cut us off from Gallic influences and led our architects to seek their models elsewhere. But though these details came by way of Germany their ultimate origin is in the Romanesque style of the Lombardic churches

FIG. 26. A belfry window of Anglo-Saxon type, eleventh century. The arches are unrecessed, their imposts are massive and square, and the mid-wall shaft is baluster-shaped.

of Italy, and the pilaster-strips, like the Norman pilaster buttress, may even be traced to those of Roman buildings.

It may be noted in passing that while the Saxon often

FIG. 27. Tower of Anglo-Saxon type, St. Michael's, Oxford, eleventh century, showing windows with baluster-shafts, and long-and-short work in the angle-stones or quoins. Cf. Fig. 2 and Pl. II.

used Roman materials the Norman employed the Roman method of building walls and columns with an enormous core of rubble faced with squared stones. But as Norman mortar was usually very bad his work had not the stability of the far slighter Saxon walling, especially

that of the early period; and so a great many Norman towers fell within a century or two of their building and often brought down the rest of the structure with

Fig. 28.

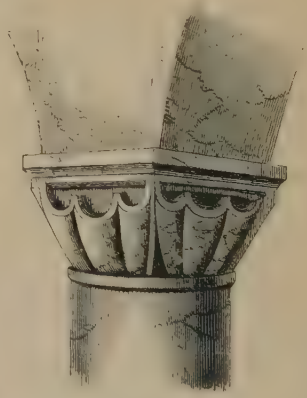


Fig. 29.

Fig. 28. Norman window, *c.* 1120, showing bold semicircular torus moulding on arch and jambs, with billet ornament below.
Fig. 29. Norman scalloped cap, *c.* 1140, with square, tile-like abacus.

them. Yet the credit for the best masonry of Anglo-Saxon date ought perhaps to be given to the foreigners who, as Bede tells us, were brought into the country by Benedict Biscop and Nectan, King of the Picts, to construct churches of more architectural dignity than the local masons could achieve.

The Normans also employed few mouldings—the chamfer with a quirk or groove above it (Fig. 30) being the chief, but their enrichments were numerous and varied. By far the commonest was the chevron or

Fig. 30. The quirk and chamfer, the most typical Norman moulding on the imposts of arches. Cf. Figs. 29, 31.

Fig. 31. The chancel arch, Headington, *c.* 1120, showing chamfered hood-mould, torus moulding, chevron ornament, star-pattern on chamfered imposts, and nook-shafts with cushion-caps, and flattened roll at base.

zigzag (Figs. 6, 31) which in various forms ran round the arches of doorways, windows, chancels and nave arcades, and, occasionally, as a string-course round

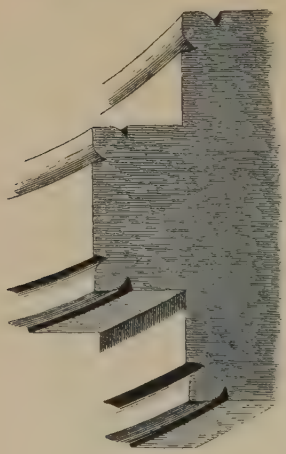


Fig. 32.

Fig. 33.

Fig. 34.

Fig. 32. The keel-moulding, characteristic of the Transition period, 1160–90. Cf. Fig. 36.

Fig. 33. The water-holding base of early thirteenth-century work.

Fig. 34. The dog-tooth ornament and the mask corbel, both characteristic of Early English Gothic.

the walls both inside and out; more often, however, the string was a heavy semicircular projection (Fig. 28); and when it ran round an arch it was sometimes cabled, like a thick rope, or enriched with beak-heads—cats' or owls' faces with beaks that curved over the semicircular moulding. Round pellets, billets oblong and cylindrical (Fig. 28), and, in early work a four-pointed star, in late

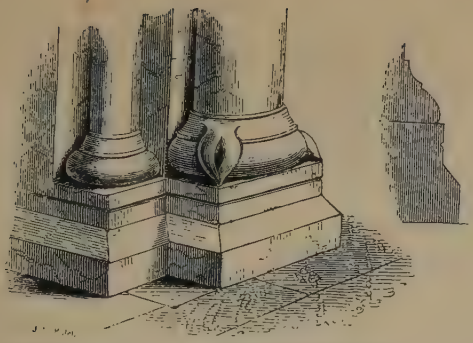


Fig. 35. Late Norman bases, *c.* 1180, with flattened roll and spur of foliage.

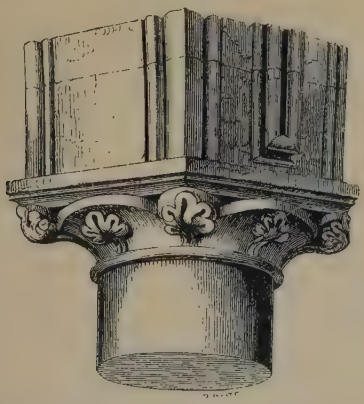


Fig. 36. Transitional cap, *c.* 1190, with keel-moulding springing from the square Norman abacus, which is supported by crude stiff-stalked Gothic foliage.

work an ornament like a jew's harp with recurving ends, were frequently used. The dripstone or hood-mould round the arch often terminated in monstrous dragon-heads like those of crocodiles, sometimes found also in the ornamental ironwork on the door itself. Usually the caps of shafts and columns were also carved. The abacus or flat stone from which the arch sprang was almost invariably square, in the Roman manner, with its lower edge chamfered off. The cap (Figs. 29, 31) upon which it rested was usually a cube of stone with its lower corners rounded like a bowl to fit the circular shaft; often it was scalloped with truncated cones (Fig. 29), and sometimes it was carved with figures of knights or with hawks or salamanders. The Norman delighted in carving, and sometimes filled in the arched head or 'tympanum' of a doorway with a great stone on which to carve figures in bas relief. These though always crude and grotesque are also spirited and interesting. They include fabulous monsters, e.g. centaurs with bows, scenes from the Lives of Saints, our Lord in Glory, the Harrowing of Hell, St. George and the Dragon, and many subjects that cannot now be identified. It should, however, be remarked that this ornate style was developed on both sides of the Channel after the Conquest. The early Norman work of the Confessor's time, at Jumièges and Westminster for example, and probably in more English churches than we can date, was severe and plain, differing from Anglo-Saxon mainly by the employment of the recessed arch with its nook-shaft and the device of the rubble-cored wall and column.

The bases of Norman columns are square, low, and usually insignificant. The insertion of the circular pier

or column is covered by a flattened roll-moulding running round its foot (Fig. 35). The Gothic builders improved away the square plinth, for it was obstructive and dangerous to shins; they sliced off its angles to make an octagon, or they rounded it to correspond with the capital above. It is worthy of note that the form of the base is the surest of all guides to the date of the work, 'so characteristic, so constant, and so easily discriminated as regards plan, projection, height, and profile'. With the pointed arch came in the keel moulding (Figs. 32, 36) and the dog-tooth enrichment (Fig. 34), both characteristic of the lancet stage of Early English Gothic, as well as of the period of transition between Norman and Gothic. On the caps crude foliage, curiously developed from the scallops,[1] in an effort to imitate French copies of Corinthian capitals, curled into knobs under the corners of the still square abacus, and a 'water-holding' hollow at the base of the column (Figs. 33, 37), are other

FIG. 37. Transitional pier, *c.* 1200, with square Norman abacus and pellet pattern on cap, combined with volutes of Gothic foliage and water-holding base.

[1] The development of the scallop-capital from Norman to Early English would provide an interesting subject for a thesis.

[illegible] which I mention work may be easily recognised. They will often be found associated with round arches, the contemporary buildings continued to use that form well into the thirteenth century if they had no

Fig. [illegible] Early English capital, showing early [illegible] and self-sunken foliage.

'walking architraves'. The form of the arch is so sadly guide to date in Norman and early Gothic work.

All these features were improved away by the next generation, even which Henry III., the great patron of the arts, was king. The heavy keel-moulding was lightened and deeper undercut and grouped in sallies so as to round the hollow, emphasizing bold shadows that starting lines. The abacus too was undercut, and was rounded so that it had no sharp corners nor square edges.

The mouldings, moreover, increase, never cease. The French retained the double square abacus, perhaps because it was a more logical form, for it clearly differentiated the load from its support. Even in Early English work this was still emphasized, in some cases, by the very bold of shadow in the undercutting at the abacus (Fig. 98).

the bell-shaped capital was carved with lobed foliage that rose stiffly to support the abacus and then drooped over in curling fronds (Fig. 38), and the water-holding base, which collected dust, was superseded by a taller one with convex moulding. Strings and hood-moulds were also undercut and the latter often ended on small corbels or projecting blocks carved to look like a buckle when seen from the front and like a mask or face when viewed sideways (Fig. 34). Like the deeply undercut moulding and the stiff-stalked foliage it is an unmistakable mark of the Early English period.

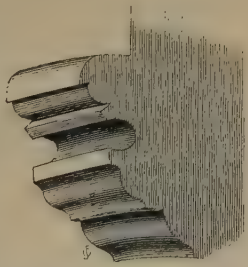


Fig. 39. Moulldings of the Decorated period, fourteenth century, the quarter-round and the ogee, with fillets between.

The increase of light from the growing windows began to affect the forms of the mouldings by the end of the thirteenth century. They grew steadily broader, and shallower, for contrasts of applied colour, not of light and shade, were now aimed at. In the fourteenth century a quarter-round was universal, a concave quarter between two convex ones (Figs. 39, 40) being most usual; often a fillet, a narrow projecting band, was cut on the convex moulding; sometimes the concavity was filled with a line of ball-flowers, an ornament which had superseded the dog-tooth and which appears to have been derived from the globular bells of horse-trappings and dogs'-collars, though possibly from the buds of the yellow water-lily (Fig. 41). In rich churches the elabo-

rately carved caps of shafts and columns have foliage faithfully copied from nature, the leaves of briony, oak, and maple and vine twined round them in a wreath. It was this richly elaborate carving that led the Gothic

Fig. 40.

Fig. 41.

Fig. 40. A Decorated cap, *c.* 1350, showing the quarter-round moulding. Cf. Fig. 46.

Fig. 41. The ball-flower ornament characteristic of the Decorated work of the early fourteenth century.

revivalist Rickman to invent the term Decorated to describe the Edwardian style; but it is really characteristic only of the greater churches; few parishes could afford the services of a carver equal to work of this kind, and so most fourteenth-century caps are simply moulded (Figs. 40, 46). It must be said, too, that beautiful as the naturalistic foliage is, it does not, like the thirteenth-century stalked foliage, express support of the abacus; it is mere ornamentation without constructive suggestion, and is thus a weakness in design.

In the middle of the century a wavy or ogee curve (Figs. 19, 43) spread from the window tracery to the mouldings of the arches. A shallow double ogee, resem-

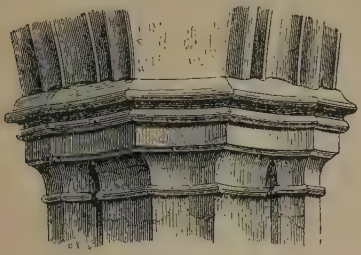


FIG. 42.

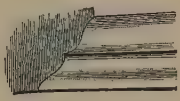


FIG. 43.

FIG. 44.

FIG. 45.

FIG. 42. A Perpendicular cap, *c.* 1450, showing shallow, angular mouldings and the fluted shaft characteristic of the fifteenth century.

FIG. 43. The double ogee, the commonest Perpendicular moulding except Fig. 44, the casement moulding.

FIG. 45. Tudor flower, the most characteristic Perpendicular ornament. Cf. Fig. 58.

bling the curves made by the pages of a book opened near the middle, was very popular all through the following century (Fig. 43). But the characteristic and unmistakable moulding of the Perpendicular style was the casement, a wide shallow hollow that ran round the

window-frame inside and out, and indeed round every arch and down every jamb in the building, and was often continued down the columns from the arches of the nave arcades (Figs. 42, 44, 58, 61).

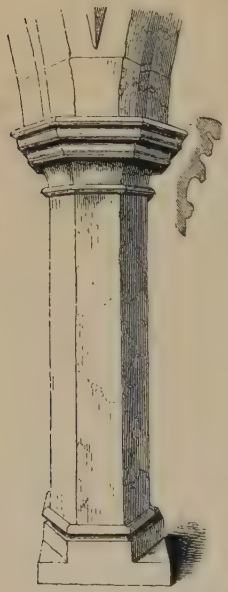


Fig. 46. A Decorated pier, *c.* 1350, showing the quarter-round moulding on the cap.

The commonest of Perpendicular ornaments were the battlement and the Tudor flower, which was also an ornamental form of the battlement; these were employed in long horizontal suites, on the transoms of windows and on the tops of screens (Figs. 45, 58). Foliage of a square and lifeless kind was sometimes cut on caps by the mason, but carving had for the most part passed into the hands of the carpenter by the end of the fourteenth century. For this was the beginning of the great age of church woodwork. One important effect of the introduction of benches was the need to raise the height of all bases in order that they might not be hidden. So the typical Perpendicular base (Fig. 23) is a tall pedestal, with its mouldings oversailing the plain polygonal foot, in which, though the pews may be gone, the traces of holes cut to receive their joists will still be visible. In the richer churches the walls also

stand upon a base-course having a projecting moulding to throw the wet clear of the foundations (Figs. 23, 47).

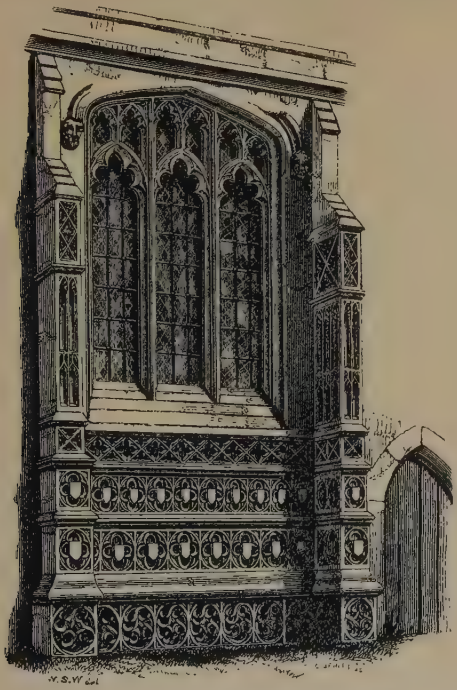


FIG. 47. Perpendicular tracery and panelling, *c.* 1450. The window with four-centred arch fills the whole space between the buttresses, which are thin and deep and of several stages.

A frequent feature in Perpendicular work is the reproduction, in sunk panels on the wall-surface, of the

rectilinear tracery of the windows. On buttresses particularly this ornamentation is very common (Fig. 47).

VII. THE ORIGIN OF THE PARISH CHURCH

WITH THESE general and introductory observations in mind, the reader will now be in a position to examine a typical parish church with the object of ascertaining the history of its development and noting the various traces of bygone customs which make every ancient church an illuminating historical record.

The first churches in England were built for the use of the monastic settlements from which the work of conversion was carried on. Most of our early examples, therefore, Jarrow, Monkwearmouth, Brixworth, Corbridge and Wing, though now parish churches were not so originally; and the same may be said of those of which portions remain at Canterbury, Ripon, Hexham, and Repton, and of most of those described in early monastic chronicles, at Peterborough, Abingdon, Glastonbury, York, Malmesbury, and other centres from which the Gospel was spread. The parish church did not, and in the social conditions could not, come into existence until the local chieftain had accepted the new faith. Our earliest existing parish church is Escomb, and even that was probably built by a monk and bishop, Wilfred, who happened to be also a 'squire' of many manors, of which Escomb seems to have been one.

It is possible, therefore, that the parish graveyard is sometimes older than the church, and the churchyard

Fig. 48. Cross of Anglo-Saxon workmanship showing interlaced pattern derived from Celtic models.

cross than either; for it, or its predecessor, would be set up by the missionaries as a sign for their converts, and round it the Christian cemetery would grow (Fig. 48). When a church came to be built it was set up on the northern side of the enclosure so that the shadow might not fall on the graves. That is why the church is never central in an old graveyard, while the cross generally is. A few churches, mainly in the north, still possess crosses of Anglo-Saxon date, though these are now usually preserved inside the building. They may be known by the curious and elaborate patterns of interlaced strapwork cut in low relief upon their shafts (Fig. 48). The same pattern is occasionally found upon Saxon fonts as at Deerhurst, and even occurs upon the impost of the chancel arch in a late Saxon church at Wallingford. It is probably Celtic in origin.

The parish was originally the estate of the converted chieftain. As he had been accustomed to provide a place of worship and a priest for his pagan followers so now he built a church for the new worship, and probably translated the priest from the old benefice to the new. Still more probably he utilized the site of the old ceremonies to build his temple for the new rites; there is evidence for believing that a great number of our ancient churches stand upon sites which had immemorial human, and perhaps religious, associations even at the time of their foundation. Some are founded upon the ruins of dolmens and stone circles; many are built within the lines of prehistoric earthworks, or have ancient mounds and barrows closely adjacent to them; and most are shadowed by yew-trees that, if not older than themselves, are almost certainly sprung from those planted

on the site by primitive man, and are perhaps vestiges of the groves in which he worshipped. For, *pace* Mr. Kipling, 'yew that is old in churchyard mould' bred no mighty bows in England: it was too knotty. Bow staves were imported from Spain; and the only practical use of the churchyard yew was to garnish the church at Easter and provide the substitute for palm branches in the annual procession round the churchyard.

By 673 when Archbishop Theodore summoned a Church Council at Hertford there were secular priests enough in England to make organization necessary. The sub-kingdoms had become sees, each with its bishop acting as chaplain and adviser to the king; and at least the greater landholders had similarly their priests who served as their chaplains and ministered to the dwellers on their estates. That he should provide a church and a priest to serve it was now expected of every thegn or 'squire', and a manorial estate became also an ecclesiastical parish. As large holdings became subdivided new parishes with their churches came into being, particularly in the Norman period. The growth of towns too, even before the Conquest, made subdivision of parishes necessary; and the churches of these urban parishes would no doubt be provided largely by the townsmen themselves, who, in this as in other matters, took the first step towards democracy by associating to secure independence of their lords.

The characteristics by which the work of a particular period is recognized, and by means of which we are enabled to date approximately any building at sight, have been gradually discriminated after a century's study of dated examples and of the documents recording their

foundation. A hundred years ago the round-arched Norman churches were believed to belong to Anglo-Saxon times and were spoken of as Saxon; but since then the discovery, for example, of an inscribed stone in the porch at Jarrow recording the dedication of the church on April 23, A. D. 684, and the examination of eleventh-century records at Durham which refer to contemporary building work there, have enabled us to say: work with details like those at Jarrow (or Monkwearmouth or Hexham or Ripon, all of which are dated by Bede or some contemporary chronicler) are early Anglo-Saxon; work like that at Durham is mid-Norman. So with the criteria of Gothic; contemporary records tell us of the new building of Westminster Abbey in 1245, and from this, checked by similarly dated examples, we are justified in assigning any traceried window of the Westminster type to the middle of the thirteenth century. So that though documents relating to the building of parish churches are but rarely found their approximate dates present little difficulty.

But even parish churches of the later Middle Ages sometimes have their records. Some, like Thame, Oxon., still possess churchwardens' accounts recording the costs of building transepts in the middle of the fifteenth century; in others the monument of the founder remains, as at Lambourn, Berks., and Wymington, Beds., with an inscription describing him as 'fundator cantarie Sce Marie istius capelle' or as 'qui istam ecclesiam de novo construxit', with the date in each instance; on some, like Lavenham in Suffolk, a dated memorial inscription runs round the parapet; and in many others a coat of arms in stained glass or in carving enables us to

identify the builder and so to date the fabric. The heraldry in Gipping Church, Suffolk, for example, shows that it was built by Sir James Tyrell, who, as we learn from Holinshed, contrived the murder of the Princes in the Tower, and was afterwards executed by Henry VII. The actual designers of our parish churches remain for the most part anonymous. The popular notion that the local craftsmen designed the work as well as executed it can be true of only the humblest buildings. The architects of several of the cathedrals are known from the fabric rolls (i.e. the building accounts) and other documentary records: they were neither monks nor masons, though it is probable that a part of their training had been done in the workshop; they had a social status and an income which made their position in no way inferior to that of their modern successors.

That men of this class were sometimes responsible for the building of parish churches is proved by existing records. The bursar's accounts at New College, for instance, record the expenses of rebuilding the chancel of Adderbury Church, of which the College was patron, in the early fifteenth century; the architect in charge of the work is referred to by name, Richard Winchcombe, the artist who was employed by the University to build the Divinity School, which he did not live to complete. The details of the two buildings show a close correspondence; but precisely similar details in the fifteenth-century work in the neighbouring churches of Bloxham and Broughton prove as conclusively as documents that these parishes also took the opportunity to secure Winchcombe's services in designing and supervising additions to their churches. There

can be no doubt that all our finer parish churches were similarly built from designs furnished by men whose experience was far wider than that of any artisan. These men, however, were certainly not ecclesiastics like William of Wykeham, whose services to architecture were merely those of an enlightened and munificent patron; they were professional architects who had devoted their lives to the study and practice of their art. William of Wykeham would have no more supposed himself competent to execute their functions than would the present Bishop of Winchester. Where he differed from his modern successors was in knowing a good architect from a bad one. His reputation as a practising architect is a baseless myth.

Little better than a myth too is the popular belief that the finer parish churches are due to the monastic impropriators. Of some churches built in the thirteenth century when monasticism was at its best this may be true; but a monastery always tended to regard a dependent parish as a source of income rather than as an object of benevolence.

The tithes collected from the parishioners had been originally levied for the relief of the poor and the upkeep of the chancel, and not for the maintenance of the priest, who was at first merely the collector and administrator; later on he was allowed to retain a share of the proceeds to augment his income from other sources, his glebe, fees, and free-will offerings. But when a church was given to a monastery by the lord of the manor the tithes passed with it, together with the responsibility for the repair of the chancel and the provision of the daily services. The monastery then, as a

rule, appointed a vicar, granting him the right to collect the tithes of certain specified farm-produce for his stipend, but retaining for its own purposes the greater tithes, i.e. of corn. Out of this income the monastery kept the chancel in repair; but, as monastic finances were generally ill-managed, the monks seldom had money to spare for any but the bare minimum of what was necessary. Indeed there is evidence that churches were allowed to go to ruin in order that the whole of their tithes should lapse to the monastery responsible for them; but there is little or no evidence, after the thirteenth century, of any monastic zeal for parochial church-building. And so it is not uncommon to find in an impropriated church a noble nave rebuilt by the parishioners, with a small, poor chancel, witness to the neglect of the monastic rectors.

VIII. MATERIALS

THOUGH certain criteria of date, such as mouldings, enrichments, window-tracery, and the prevailing form of arch were constant throughout England, there is still at all dates a great variety in the churches of different districts; a fifteenth-century church in East Anglia, for example, is a very different building from one of the same date in north Oxfordshire, though both have the rectilinear tracery, the angular mouldings, and the pedestal bases which mark the Perpendicular period.

These differences are due to various causes, historical, economic, geological—the last, perhaps, being most important.

The builders of our great abbey churches had resources that made them independent of local conditions; if good building stone was not locally available they could, and did, import it. Thus in Norman times vast quantities of free-stone were brought from the quarries at Caen; the comparatively small dimensions of the cubes in Norman ashlar are due to the difficulties of transporting large blocks; in the thirteenth century the dark marble of Purbeck was sent all over England in the form of shafts and caps to carry the orders of recessed arches and provide that contrast of colouring which was the ideal of the time, as may be seen in the light and shade of the deeply-cut mouldings of the Early English style (Fig. 51); and in the later Middle Ages the deficiency of building-stone in the eastern counties was supplied even in parish churches, by the importation of bricks from the Netherlands, described in the churchwardens' accounts as 'Flaundres tyles'.

But all but a few parishes had to cut their coat according to their cloth and make the best of their local materials. The result was to stimulate resourcefulness and to produce local ingenuities of the highest architectural interest and charm.

Our best native building material is the oolitic limestone of which a broad band stretches diagonally across the country from Somerset, through Gloucester, Wiltshire, Oxon., Northants. and Lincoln to Yorkshire. Along this line therefore are found the noblest churches, the towers of Somerset, the spires of Lincoln and Northants., the statuary and foliage of Wells, Salisbury, Lincoln, and Southwell, and the fine detail of the innumerable parish churches for which they served as

models. In every age this advantage is manifest—in the Anglo-Saxon work at Bradford, Barnack, Wittering, and Earls Barton, for example, no less than in the late Perpendicular towers of Cricklade and Magdalen College, and that crowning glory of Gothic, the steeple at Louth.

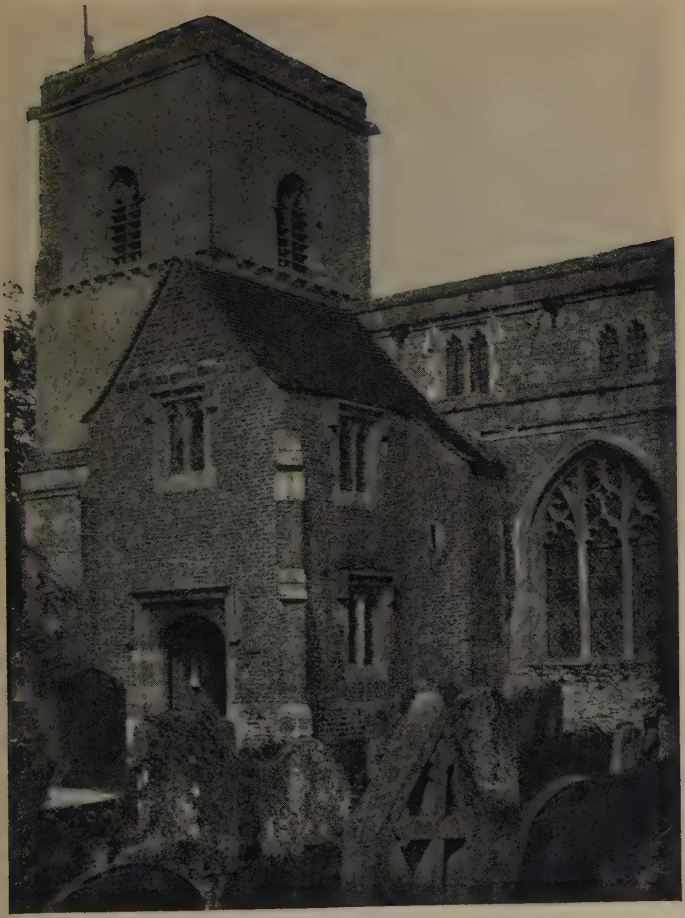
But the stoneless fenland is almost equally rich in fine churches, for its numerous waterways made the transport of building material a comparatively easy matter.

The west had its quarries of warm red sandstone; but this, though beautiful in colour, is soon eroded by wind and rain and is therefore a poor material for mouldings and sculpture on the exterior of a building. On the other hand the granite of Cornwall though durable is too dour and intractable for fine carving; and the flint of the chalk districts, in Berkshire, Sussex, and East Anglia, cannot be carved at all. In these last districts therefore the necessary free-stone for quoins and tracery had to be imported and was therefore used with the utmost economy. So the builders often dispensed with quoins in their towers by making them circular; when the wool-trade had enriched the chalk-lands, in the late fourteenth and fifteenth century, an upper stage of imported ashlar was added to many an early round tower, e.g. at Shefford and Welford in Berks., Acle, Norfolk, and Mutford, Suffolk. Vaults, of course, were out of the question, as were shingles for roofing, and so many churches were covered with thatch for which, in the east, the local reeds formed an excellent material.

But, as ever in medieval construction, the necessity of

DESCRIPTION OF PLATE IV

The corbel-table, marking the original height of the tower, shows that the building dates from the Norman period. (The font and the jambs of the chancel arch are contemporary.) The tower was heightened in the fourteenth century, when (as their arcades show) the aisles were added; their windows, however, were enlarged in the fifteenth century, when the nave walls were carried up to receive the clearstory. The porch was added early in the sixteenth century and shows Tudor brick-work (see p. 79). In the gable, which has been rebuilt, modern brick-work can be compared as to size and bond with the older type.



IV. SUTTON COURTENAY, BERKS. SOUTH-WEST OF NAVE

the builder became his glory: the East Anglian 'flush-work', of flint panelling, is so delightful in its colour-contrasts and its ingenious mosaic pattern-work that no one beholding it regrets the absence of ashlar; and the marvellous woodcarving is quite as impressive in its way as the statuary of the free-stone churches. Sussex with her 'deep ghylls that breed huge oaks and old', developed the timber spire and bell-cote, roofed with oaken shingles, and like the other stoneless districts, produced picturesque wooden porches of massive oak framing.

It was in East Anglia too that the material of which most modern buildings are constructed first came back into use, a thousand years after the last Romano-British bricklayer had laid down his line and trowel. Slabs of sun-dried clay had been a prehistoric substitute for stone; and burnt bricks had been the popular building material of the Roman Empire—they provided the Anglo-Saxons with ready-made slabs for many early churches. But, although roof-tiles continued to be baked, bricks ceased to be made in England after the Saxon invasion until their importation from the Netherlands (where lack of stone had led to their general use) in the late thirteenth century, suggested to the East Coast builders the advisability of developing a home supply. Hull, where the connexion of the De la Poles with the Hanse merchants had led to the early importation of brick, was perhaps the first town to possess a brick-field; but Essex and Suffolk, where also the De la Poles owned the manor of Wingfield, and Norfolk, where there were large settlements of Flemings, were making bricks in the fourteenth century though they did not come into general use until the fifteenth, and

even then their use remained local, particularly in church-building.

The hospital at Ewelme, Oxon., and the chapel of Holy Trinity, Hull, both built by the De la Poles, are among the noblest brick buildings in England. Most of the other brick churches are of late date, many of them belonging to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; for though brick became the principal material in the great house-building movement of the Tudors there was little need for new churches in the sixteenth century.

Brick, however, afforded a cheap and easy means of adding a tower to a church which had not yet got one; and so a good many parishes built or rebuilt a church tower with the new material from 1600 onwards. Brick-work of early date may be known by the smaller size of the bricks and by their richer colour, usually a bright mulberry, and even more certainly by their 'English bonding', in which rows of headers and stretchers alternate vertically. In the seventeenth century Flemish bond came into fashion, with the headers and stretchers alternating in a horizontal row (Pl. IV).

Geology also influenced architecture indirectly, through its economic consequences. The Cotswolds, for instance, not only afforded building-stone but sheep-walks; and noble buildings like the churches at Camden, Northleach, Cirencester, and Fairford, owe their splendour to the wealth created by the wool-trade—and also to the concentration of that wealth in the hands of the great capitalists who make their appearance in English industrial history with the rise of the De la Poles of Hull in the reign of Edward III. Wherever we find a specially magnificent parish church built or

rebuilt after that date we shall find also that it was built out of the profits of capital by some individual manufacturer or merchant, some medieval Morris or Carnegie. Thus the Grevels rebuilt Camden, the Forteys Northleach, the Tames Fairford, and the Springs the great church of Lavenham in Suffolk.

So the iron of Sussex, smelted with charcoal from her oakwoods, explains the presence of many fine churches in a district where free-stone was rare, and explains, too, the presence in them of grave-slabs of a material not found elsewhere in England—cast iron. On the other hand, the increase of wealth which led to the vast enlargement of East Anglian churches in the Perpendicular period was due to geographical conditions: the Flemings, with their arts of weaving and brick-making, settled most numerously in those parts of England nearest to the Netherlands, which also were the parts most favourably situated to dispose of their cloth in the Continental markets.

Geography too explains some peculiarities which the Norman churches of Sussex share with those of Normandy with which her ports were once in constant communication; so the medieval alliance of Scotland with France has left its traces in the ancient Scots churches, which, for example, are usually vaulted throughout, like the French.

IX. HOW TO STUDY THE FABRIC

HAVING BEEN originally built, as a rule, by the squire, the church usually adjoins the manor house or the farm which now represents it. Almost invariably the existing level of the graveyard is above that of the road outside; for not only do roads get worn down but as the dead were buried century after century in the same narrow field the ground steadily rose, and the later generations lie in the dust of the earlier. Only the rich were coffined; the vast majority were buried in shrouds as the rubric in the Burial Service reminds us, 'the earth shall be cast upon the *body*'; they therefore disintegrated rapidly and made room for new comers. Dr. Cox in *The Parish Registers of England* quotes an illuminating entry from the Burial Register of Poyning:

> 'The xviij day of April (1608) was buried John Skerry a poore man that died in the place (manor house) stable, and being brought half naked with his face bare the parson would not burye him soe but first he gave a sheete and caused him to be sacked therein and they buried him more Christian like.'

So the present level of the graveyard may be five or six feet above the sill of the church door and the path that leads to it.

The grave-stones now remaining are seldom earlier than the seventeenth century. Until the end of the eighteenth they were low and massive, their tops were cut into ogee curves, and they were decorated with skulls, crossbones, and hourglasses, or with 'swags' and volutes in the Renaissance style (Pl. VII a).

The outside of the church should always be first

DESCRIPTION OF PLATE V

a. The upper part of a pilaster-strip and the sill of a small window west of it show that the wall was originally the external face of an eleventh-century aisleless nave (cf. Pl. II), through which arches were cut to build an aisle towards the end of the twelfth century.

b. The unrecessed arch and heavy, uncut imposts are characteristic of Anglo-Saxon work both early and late; but the pilaster-strips and the long-and-short work indicate that the building is not earlier than the tenth century.

V a. BIBURY, GLOS. NORTH WALL OF NAVE

V b. EARLS BARTON, NORTHANTS. THE WEST DOORWAY

examined. Sometimes a trace of long-and-short work on the jamb of a doorway or on the angle of the tower or nave, or a narrow projecting band of it in the form of a pilaster-strip on the face of a wall, may be all that is left to indicate the Anglo-Saxon origin of the building (Pl. II).

Even where a Saxon church has been completely swept away a vestige of it may remain in the form of a sundial of peculiar construction reset in the later building. On the south wall of almost every medieval church there will be found roughly scratched circles with lines 15° apart radiating from a central hole that once contained a metal pin. That the shadows on these were used as time-indicators there can be no doubt, but what times they marked and how accurately is still quite unknown; they are entirely different from the scientifically constructed dials of later times, in which the angles increase as the lines approach the horizontal. But they are also very different from the dials of the Anglo-Saxons; these marked not the hours but the 'tides' or eighth parts into which the Old English day was divided, and their circles therefore have three radii dividing their lower halves into four equal parts and marking the middle of each of the daylight tides (Fig. 49). These rays are deeply cut in wedge-shaped grooves and terminate in crosses. There is usually an additional radius, midway in the upper half-quadrant on the western side of the semicircle, marking the beginning of the first tide of the day, i.e. 7.30 a.m.

The Anglo-Saxon dials were clearly cut by skilled workmen, not scratched; but it is extremely unlikely that their makers could have discovered empirically a

method of setting a gnomon so that its shadow should fall accurately on the radii all through the year. The later dial-makers may have realized that this was beyond

FIG. 49. Anglo-Saxon dial, Kirkdale, on which the shadow indicated the tides of the day, falling on the ray marked by a star at 7.30 and on the vertical ray at noon. The short, intermediate rays are unusual additions marking the beginning and end of each tide. The inscription tells that 'Orm son of Gamal bought St. Gregory's minster when it was all ruined and fallen down, and he caused it to be made new from the ground to Christ and St. Gregory in Edward's days the king and in Tosti's days the earl. This is the day's sun-marker at every tide. Hayward made me and Brand priests'. Tosti, Harold's brother, was Earl of Northumbria 1055–65.

their powers and that an elaborately cut dial was therefore not worth the trouble it cost. They were probably content with a very rough approximation to the real time. But, since few churches are precisely orientated, even this would only have been possible if the gnomon was bent at an angle, and, moreover, an angle altered

with the varying height of the sun at different seasons. It has been suggested that separate dials served at different times of the year, each with its gnomon at the appropriate angle. This would explain the duplication frequently noticed. But as there is no documentary evidence all this must be guess-work. Meanwhile a sculptured dial marked with the tides may be regarded as fairly safe evidence that the church upon which it occurs is of Anglo-Saxon work or replaces a pre-Conquest building.

In Anglo-Saxon times the priest was required to be in the church for seven services daily, but after the eleventh century three daily services were considered sufficient in parish churches. Churchwardens' accounts show that most parishes, at any rate in the towns, possessed clocks in the fourteenth century. It is therefore very unusual to find a dial on a town church.

Often a doorway with zigzag or other Norman ornament will be found in the wall of a Gothic aisle; its arch will not always be semicircular; for the builders who reset it in their aisle may, as at Great Tew and Bloxham, Oxon., have rebuilt it in a new form. Some Norman doorways have been moved more than once: when an aisle was first added to a Norman nave, and again when the aisle was widened—for the later builders seem to have admired the Norman carving; at Sutton Courtenay, Berks., and in some other churches they preserved in a side chapel the chancel arch which they had found it necessary to replace; at Bampton and Headington, Oxon., they even went to the trouble of inserting a relieving arch into the wall above Norman chancel arches that they wished to preserve (Fig. 31).

Sometimes a wide pilaster-buttress, or a line of heavy string course broken by later windows, proves that a wall is of Norman date though all its doors and windows are later insertions (Pls. III, VII). This may be revealed too by a row of carved corbels projecting to carry the eaves of the roof (Fig. 50); for the Norman plan of drainage was to make the roof wider than the building so that it sheltered the face of the wall and the foundations, like the thatch-eaves of a barn. The later builders commonly employed a parapet with a gutter inside it to collect the rain instead of allowing it to drop from the eaves; openings in the parapet at intervals allowed the water to gush out through gargoyles, grotesque spouts, which shot it clear of the foundations. This arrangement also facilitated repairs since it enabled workmen to walk along the eaves; and therefore the Norman corbel table now often carries a parapet of

Fig. 50. Upper part of south wall of nave, Cuddesdon. The flat pilaster-buttress, partly cut away, the corbel-table, and blocked windows show that this was the external wall of a late Norman nave through which arches were cut to form the present aisle in the Early English period. Cf. Pl. V.

later date (Pls. IV, VII). Dripping eaves, however, as the simpler plan, were retained in the humbler buildings, and at the date of the Renaissance were supplemented by the modern system of metal guttering. At Cumnor the line of Norman corbels is midway up the nave walls, showing that these were heightened when the fourteenth-century clearstory was inserted (Pl. VII).

Again a pair of low, shallow buttresses at the angle of the chancel, or a mask-corbel reused in the hood-mould of a Perpendicular window, may suggest that a wall has been rebuilt upon an Early English base; frequently the high-pitched 'weathering' like an inverted V on the face of a tower, above the existing nave roof, proves the original building to be Norman or early Gothic though rebuilding may have left no other trace of the fact—for early roofs, being tiled, were always of steep pitch; later ones, covered with lead, were flatter. From the weather-mould too we may learn the width of the earlier nave.

All these indications are clues to be followed up inside the building. For example, a plain tub-shaped font in a church showing long-and-short work will probably be Saxon also; Norman traces outside will similarly suggest examination of the font, and also of the chancel arch and particularly of its jambs which often remain unaltered though the arch itself has been rebuilt[1]; or when, as frequently happens, the eastern arches of the nave are different from the others, the explanation usually is that a Norman central tower has fallen or been taken down.

So a pair of angle-buttresses may be corroborated by

[1] At Bibury the early Gothic chancel arch has Saxon imposts with crude acanthus foliage from a Romano-British model.

the presence of a double piscina (Fig. 51), or by the jambs of vanished lancets at the sides of a later window as at Ramsbury, Wilts. And on the inside face of the

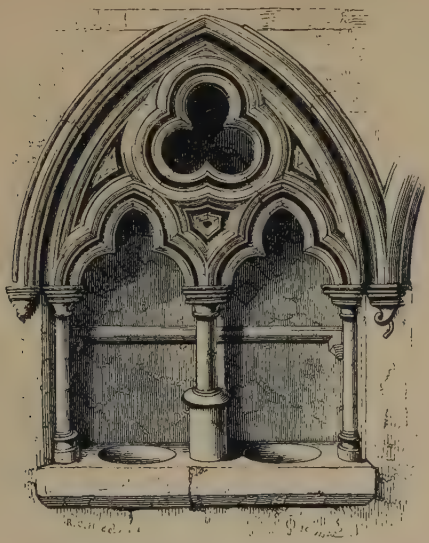


FIG. 51. Early English piscina, *c.* 1250, with geometrical tracery and deeply cut moulding. The two drains were used to receive the rinsings of the ablutions of the priest's hands and the sacred vessels before and after the Consecration of the Elements.

tower there may be a gabled weathering, showing that the nave walls have been raised for the insertion of clearstory windows above the nave arcade, which proves that the bases of the walls are older than their upper portions; the clearstory in a parish church is almost

invariably an addition to the original building, and is usually of the fifteenth century.

Tostock church in Suffolk affords a highly interesting opportunity for this kind of architectural detective work. As it stands it is a fifteenth-century building, complete even to its pews. Every detail suggests that it was newly built late in the Perpendicular period. Yet at the exterior face of the west end is a 'straight joint' suggesting that a flat Norman buttress has been absorbed in the present walling; and an examination of the interior reveals in the eastern wall of the nave the line of a gable above the present chancel arch and below the existing roof-line. It is therefore clear that the church was built around and above a smaller Norman building, the roof and side walls of which were then pulled down and removed; for, since daily services must be carried on while the new work was in progress, it was usual to leave the old standing until the new was ready.

When an aisle was added, for example, its wall was built and its roof put on without disturbance to the nave until all was finished; then the nave wall was pierced with arches inserted one by one, the daily services all the time going on within.

So when a chancel was lengthened, as at Iffley in the early thirteenth century, the Norman east wall was left untouched until the new sanctuary was complete; then it was taken down and the debris and scaffolding were got out through a rough archway, a 'mason's hole', left for the purpose and subsequently walled up, the traces of which are still visible (Pl. VII). This piecemeal method accounts for the fact that the parts are sometimes out of line; the chancel, for example, is often out

of alignment with the nave. The theory that this was done intentionally to symbolize the drooping Head on the Cross is a modern fancy.

FIG. 52. Wood Eaton. A small Early English church, *c.* 1220, with a Perpendicular tower inserted *c.* 1450. The fall of the ground prevented any westward extension.

The addition of an aisle to an earlier nave invariably leaves clear traces of what has been done; the original doorway may be reused in the new aisle wall; or above the nave arcades there may be small blocked windows cut into by the heads of the arches (Fig. 50); if the latter are Early English the windows, and thus the original walls, will be Norman or even Saxon. In that case a

DESCRIPTION OF PLATE VI

The flat angle-buttresses show that the chancel is of late Norman date, though its windows and the deeper buttress are of the fourteenth century. The tower was added and the aisle widened (its arcade is contemporary with the angle-buttresses) in the fifteenth century, as the Perpendicular window-tracery testifies.

The ogee tracery of the south window (cf. Pl. VIII) illustrates the commonest of all fourteenth-century designs, and gives the 'repeat pattern' for the reticulated tracery of the east window.

VI. OGBOURNE ST. GEORGE, WILTS. FROM THE SOUTH-EAST

deep respond, being part of the original wall through which the arches were cut, should be looked for at the eastern and western ends of the arcade. A deep respond, alone, is evidence that an aisleless nave preceded the existing plan.

So if an aisle has been widened its new windows will not march with the arches of the nave arcade and thus the fact is patent. And as widening implies raising the roof, the line of corbels that carried the original one may be visible below the new; or the clerestory of the old aisle may now look into the new below the present line of the roof (Fig. 50).

When the doorway is more than one bay from the west we may know that the nave has been lengthened and may expect to find the western arches different from the others. And again if the buttresses of the western tower are visible inside the church it is obvious that the tower was built clear of the nave, the walls of which were then lengthened to join up with it. In such a case there will be a 'straight joint' at the junction, i.e. the stones of the wall will not be bonded into the tower. So if a western tower has side arches these will sometimes be later than its eastern arch, showing that they were cut through the side walls when the aisles were lengthened to overlap or 'engage' the tower. When, however, a tower so engaged is later than the west wall of the church, it has clearly been inserted, not added; in such a case the explanation may be as at Wood Eaton, Oxon. (Fig. 52), that a roadway prevented any westward extension of the building. This difficulty was in some instances overcome by building the western tower upon open arches over the roadway.

While some churches have thus grown larger others have lost aisles or chapels, pulled down to save the expense of repairs. The blocked arches that opened into them may usually be traced; and their windows may have been reset in the new wall. A blocked doorway in a chancel will show that a vestry has been pulled down; sometimes a further trace of it will be found in a piscina, or a blocked squint, visible on the outer face of the wall.

X. THE PORCH

IT IS SAID that as a rule the church stands north of the village; certainly the south door was the one commonly used, and it is often larger and more elaborate than that on the north and is usually furnished with a porch. The public notices still posted here remind us that the porch was the usual place for much civil business in the medieval parish. The coroner sat here and not in the local public house; executors made public payment of legacies; marriage banns were published, the 'I will' was said and the ring given by 'hosbonds at the chirche dore'; and those who broke their vows did penance appropriately at the place where they took them, or alternatively at the reading-desk, clad in a white sheet. Here, too, the baptismal service was begun, so that the southern entrance was sometimes called the Christening-door; through it too the parishioners passed to their graves, after being borne completely through the church from the north side.

Usually the porch had stone seats, and a stoup for holy water, though this was sometimes in a recess inside

the door, on the right-hand side, conveniently for the fingers of the right hand, with which the entering worshipper crossed himself (Fig. 53). Fresh water, to which salt was added, was consecrated every Sunday; its purpose was to put the enterer in remembrance of his baptismal vows, of the Blood shed for his redemption, of the need to cleanse his soul from sin, and finally of the transitoriness of life, unstable as water. In rare instances traces exist of an altar in the porch, perhaps for the witnesses taking oath, or for sellers giving a warranty, for, as Mr. Hardy reminds us in the preface to *The Well-Beloved*, sales of property 'were carried out and covenanted in the parish church, in the face of the congregation'.

After the thirteenth century porches were frequently built with an upper room approached by a newel stair inside the church, and sometimes furnished with a fire-place and an oven, as at Northleach, where the room is obviously meant for habitation—it has candle-sconces over the fire-place. Probably this, and similar rooms occasionally found in towers, e.g. at Rycote, Oxon., were used by chantry priests both to sleep in on occasion, as, for instance, before celebrating a morrow-mass for travellers in the early morning, and also as a school for the choristers, the teaching of whom was frequently one of the conditions of the bequests on which they lived. Long after the Reformation this room was used for the same purpose; every one has heard of 'the pedant that keeps a school in a church': he had a contemporary who willed that his body should be buried 'in the lower end of the church, at the stayre foot that goeth up to my schole'. The upper room, too, contained the library and any other treasures possessed by the church, in-

FIG. 53. A Decorated doorway with stoups, niches for images, and the shield of the donor. *c.* 1330.

cluding, sometimes, relics which were exhibited to the congregation from a high doorway opening into the

nave above the south door. If, as was often the case, a watcher was employed, he too would use this room, from which most of the interior of the church could be seen. At Cirencester the great porch was built by the trade guilds, who used one of its two upper stories for their meetings.

In the porch at Wanborough, Wilts., there remains an eighteenth-century notice requiring 'all females to remove their pattens before entering the church'. When I was last there the sexton's wife was dusting it—in silk stockings and suède shoes.

XI. THE NAVE

THE WESTERN bay of the nave was the baptistery; it was clear of benches, even when these existed elsewhere in the church, and the font stood in the centre of it: a stone desk on a nave pier, or a stone plinth projecting from its base, or a niche for the vessel containing holy oil, may still mark the original position if the font has been moved to make room for the modern pews.

Fonts usually bear in their mouldings and other ornaments unmistakable marks of their date—a few very early examples are formed of Roman altars or capitals, some are supported on Norman shafts with cushion-caps (Fig. 54), or are decorated with panels of crude Norman figure-sculpture, some have the dog-tooth and lobed foliage of the thirteenth century (Fig. 38), some the ball-flower of the fourteenth (Fig. 41), some reproduce on their panelled faces the tracery of contemporary windows (Fig. 55). But a few are simply tubs of stone without any mouldings to indicate their

date. These are sometimes Saxon, and reproduce the form of the wooden tub in which the early convert stood while the baptismal water was poured over him, but

FIG. 54. Norman font, *c.* 1140, with scroll-work and interlacing round arches carried on shafts with scallop caps.

others are of transitional date, *c.* 1180, when for some reason the form seems to have come again into fashion. To this date also belong most of the lead fonts of which there are about thirty still in existence. After the Reformation wood was again, on occasion, employed to make a font where, as at Stanford-in-the-Vale, freestone was not locally available.

All medieval fonts are large and deep, the older the deeper; for immersion, as the rubric in our Prayer Books still reminds us, was the rule. They all bear the

marks of the staple by which the lid was fastened down; for superstitious uses of the christening water, which remained permanently in them, led in the thirteenth

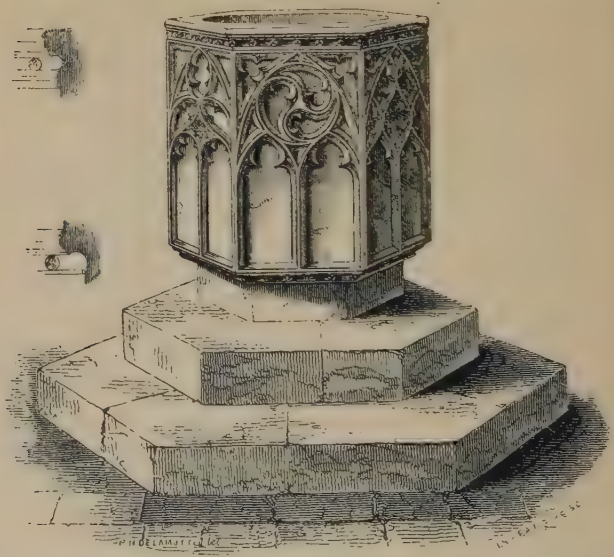


FIG. 55. Decorated font, *c.* 1340, with ball-flower ornament round the rim, and panels showing tracery characteristic of fourteenth-century windows.

century to an order that all fonts should be kept locked. Their lids originally seem to have been low and plain: the earliest, of the thirteenth century, is at Charlton, Oxon. But in the fifteenth century, the great age of woodwork, many or most of them were provided with elaborate canopies of which fine examples yet exist.

The seventeenth century which provided so many of our churches with pulpits also re-covered fonts which had lost their canopies, but covers of this date are usually low and simply moulded pyramids or cones, topped by a ball or acorn.

Some churches possess two or even more fonts, for at all periods, and particularly the Norman, the builders were ready to replace an old font by a finer one; and in the eighteenth century the large medieval font was often condemned as useless and supplanted by a small marble urn on a pedestal. The archaeologists of our own age have rescued many of these discarded relics from base uses in farmyards and replaced them in the churches. Sometimes, however, their zeal, like Mr. Pickwick's, has misled them, for example at Coombe, Oxon., where a well-head, carved by an ingenious villager, has lately been placed in the church in the belief that it was an ancient font.

It should be noted that many fonts have suffered alteration: some have been transformed from the tub-shaped to the chalice-form and are thus much older than they look; some have received additional ornamentation; and many are set on bases of a date different from that of their cups. So after the Commonwealth when Charles II ordered the parishes to replace their broken fonts, many imitations of earlier work were produced which may perplex the novice.

There is some evidence for the existence of 'schools' of font-makers who specialized in this branch of masonry. Thus Buckinghamshire has a most beautiful type of font devised in the late Norman period, of which examples, evidently from the same workshop, still exist

at Dinton, Kimble, Bledlow, Aylesbury, and elsewhere. So in Gloucestershire in the early thirteenth century there was evidently a font-maker who specialized in lead-work, and has left specimens of his work at Frampton, Siston, Oxenhall, Tidenham, Lancant, and Sandhurst, all from the same mould. There is no doubt that other schools could be traced by the curious, just as glass from the same workshop can be identified in various parts of England. Thus the east window of the chapel at North Moreton, Berks. (in which Milo de Stapleton, of the great Yorkshire family, had licence to found a chantry in March 1299), so closely resembles the early fourteenth-century glass in the west windows of the aisles at York that it is obviously from the same workshop. Mr. Le Couteur in *English Medieval Painted Glass* described a figure of St. Catherine in the west window at Cirencester which is exactly reproduced in the east window at Oddingley, Worcestershire, and is obviously not merely from the same workshop but from the same cartoon. Shields of arms, the royal coat especially, beyond all question were duplicated from one cartoon, almost like photographs from a negative; the Giffard shields at Buckland, Berks., for example, are identical with the one at Baldon, Oxon., of the reign of Edward III, and were probably made by the Oxford firm who glazed the windows of the Latin Chapel in the cathedral. Occasionally the actual artificer can be identified: on the doors of some Bedfordshire churches, Leighton Buzzard, Turvey, and Eaton Bray, the ironwork is identical with that on the tomb of Queen Eleanor in Westminster Abbey for which 'Thomas de Leighton' was paid £12 in 1294. Apparently his work

in his own district had been brought to the notice of the king.

Sepulchral monuments, too, often show in their workmanship such close resemblances as to make it clear that they came from the same workshop. There is, for instance, an Elizabethan tomb at Somerton, Oxon., for which the contract still exists and tells us that it was made for the executors of Thomas Fermor by the firm of Richard and Gabriel Roiley of Burton-on-Trent. Detail photographs taken by Mr. F. E. Howard prove conclusively that ten or twelve similar tombs in other counties must have come from the same workshop. From his study of the coats of arms on the tombs Mr. Howard was led to make the further very interesting discovery that most of the persons commemorated were inter-connected by marriage, and hence that the widespread business of the Roileys, like that of our great modern firms, was based largely on the recommendations of satisfied customers.

The north door is now usually blocked, but was in constant use in the Middle Ages, both for processions, and at funerals and christenings; it is said that it was known as the devil's door, and that it was left open at baptisms in order that by it the evil spirit might leave the regenerated infant. Its blocking may therefore be due to its association with 'superstitious uses', though as there is no record of any general injunction ordering its closure, the dislike of draughts may account for it. The west door, after Norman times, was used but rarely, e.g. at the great annual procession on Palm Sunday.

The construction and ornament of a medieval door

will invariably be found of interest. The earlier doors, particularly, are of unique value because they afford the sole surviving examples of the skill of the most important of medieval craftsmen, the smith. In Norman and early Gothic doors the carpentry is always subsidiary to the ironwork, on which both the strength and the beauty of the door depend—the great nails, clenched on the inner side to weld together the two layers of stout planks, and the massive hinges of hammered iron, on which Time, like Æsop's viper, has gnawed in vain.

Norman hinges resemble a great sword with a crescent-shaped guard (Fig. 57); the crescent is supposed to represent a C and to refer to St. Clement, the patron of smiths; and as his emblem was an anchor, to which also the hinge bears some resemblance, there may be truth in this. But the crescent as a religious symbol is far older than Christianity, like the craft of the smith, and it has probably associations with cults long forgotten. Throughout the thirteenth century ironwork grew more and more elaborate until the outward face of the door was covered with a scroll-work of foliage resembling that on the contemporary caps (Fig. 56). When window-tracery was fully developed, in the next century, it suggested a new means of enriching the surface of doors; and so the smith gave place to the carpenter.

At first the tracery-forms with which the door was covered were sunk in the solid so that the door was panelled like a fifteenth-century font or buttress; but the more common method was to apply a traceried pattern by means of glue and nails. Plain hinges were fitted on the inner, undecorated side, and only the

handles gave the smith an opportunity to exhibit the artistic side of his craft. These, it may be remarked, were intended merely for pulling-to the door, and were

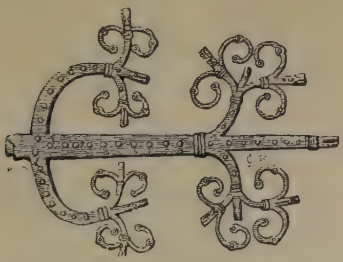


Fig. 56. Late Norman hinge. *c.* 1180.

Fig. 57. Norman hinge. *c.* 1120.

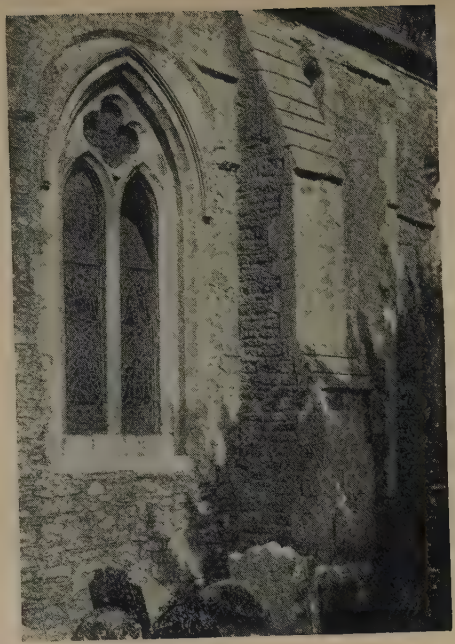
not sanctuary-knockers; a fugitive was in safety when he reached consecrated ground; he had no need to cling to the door-handle.

The wood used for doors, and indeed for all other church furniture, was oak; the stories of chestnut roofs are sextons' tales.

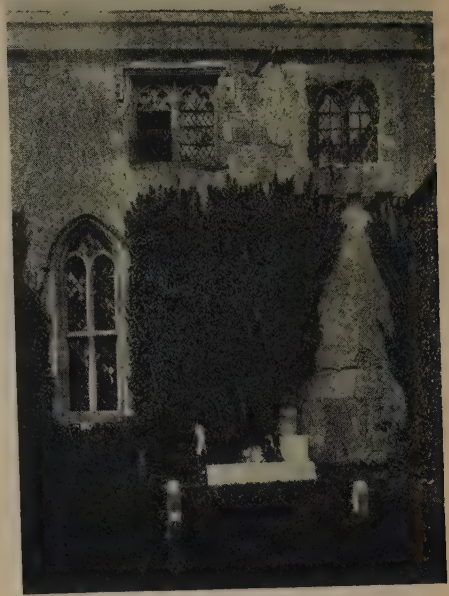
DESCRIPTION OF PLATE VII

a. The heavy string-course and the flat buttress show that the western part of the wall is Norman; the thinner string-course tells that the church was extended eastwards in the thirteenth century, when the window with simple geometrical tracery was inserted in the place of a Norman one. The blocked archway east of the buttress was a 'mason's hole' (see p. 90). The large buttress is modern. The gravestones are of eighteenth-century date.

b. The corbels projecting half-way up the wall mark the line of the original eaves and show that the lower part of the nave wall is Norman; the flat buttress, partly hidden by the white gravestone, is contemporary. The smaller clearstory window and the tall one to the west show that the walls were heightened in the middle of the fourteenth century; larger clearstory windows were inserted in the fifteenth century, when the cornice and parapet were added.



VII a. IFFLEY, OXON. SOUTH WALL OF CHANCEL



VII b. CUMNOR, BERKS. SOUTH WALL OF NAVE

Originally the aisles and nave were clear of all seats except a few stone benches for the infirm round the walls and, in some churches, the piers, as at Clifton Hampden, Oxon., and Sutton Bonnington, Notts. People came to church primarily to adore the Visible Presence, and to take part in the sacrifice of the Mass, 'meekly kneeling upon their knees'. The original duty of the vergers who still head our processions with their wands, was to clear a way through the congregation scattered over the nave floor. The references to seats in the earliest churchwardens' accounts suggest that they were at first provided for women only. Among the earliest pews are those at Cassington, Oxon., which show Early English mouldings of the late thirteenth century. But benches in parish churches were a rare luxury until the end of the fifteenth century when the sermon became a much more important element in the service, and the pulpit was established as a permanent part of the church furniture. It seems previously to have been a movable structure, though there is a fourteenth-century fixed pulpit at Over Winchendon, Bucks., and a large number, both of wood and stone, in Gloucestershire, of the early fifteenth century. Those of stone, being not easily removable, show that the original position of the pulpit was one bay west of the chancel arch, usually on the south side. Old pulpits are much less roomy than their modern successors; the preachers may have been smaller, or less histrionic in their oratorical methods.

The early pews, belonging as they do to the great age of English woodwork, are magnificent examples of the carpenter's art. The finest schools were in

East Anglia and the West Country. The height and depth of the seats prove that Tudor folk were considerably smaller than their descendants. On the other hand the book-ledge invariably provided suggests that the masses were neither so illiterate nor even so bookless as is popularly supposed; it is possible, however, that the ledges may have served as elbow-rests to the kneeling congregation.

Where the pews have escaped partial destruction their spacing shows that room was left at the west end for the baptistery and at the east for the side altars that, in an aisleless nave, stood against the chancel screen. But in the vast majority of churches the medieval seats were cast out in the late seventeenth century to make room for the great loose-boxes and high-backed enclosed pews in which a degenerate age sheltered itself from the draughts and from the eye of its neighbour. These, and the high galleries introduced at the same time, made expedient the elevation of the pulpit; and so the 'three decker' came into existence, with its sounding board above, close to the newly inserted ceiling of white-washed plaster that hid the carved timbers of the roof. The hour-glass stand which, though the glass itself has gone, is fixed on or near the pulpit, was introduced in the sixteenth century and became usual in the seventeenth, as we learn from churchwardens' accounts. Binfield, Berks., has one of the most interesting specimens, of wrought ironwork dated 1628, with the arms of the Smiths' and Farriers' Company.

These things excited the Gothic revivalists to a fury unequalled by that of any previous desecrators, and therefore an interior like that of Wood Eaton, Oxon.,

untouched since Stuart times, or that of Chislehampton in the same county, where the church was built and fitted in the reign of George II, is almost as rare as one, like Fairford, little altered since the late Middle Ages.

The free floor-space of the medieval nave was put to many and various secular uses; it was the scene of trial by ordeal in early times and of ecclesiastical courts later; county courts were sometimes held in it; and if the lord of the manor had no house in the parish he too would hold his court here. It was also the repository for many articles of public property: the regimental colours still found in some parish churches remind us that the arms and, after Tudor times, the gunpowder, which every parish had to provide, were stored in the church; when the room above the porch at Baldock was opened in the last century after having been closed and disused for generations, a large store of arms and armour was found in it. Other churches still possess a few 'backs and breasts' of the seventeenth century, but as specimens of ancient armour and weapons now command a high price they have been turned into money and will be sought for in vain.

The helmets and swords placed over the tombs of knights and squires were almost always imitations cheaply made for the purpose, genuine war gear being much too expensive to be so wasted. But actual helmets of out-of-date fashion were sometimes used as trophies. The great helm of Sir William Barentine at Haseley, Oxon., for instance, is a real fighting helmet. Such genuine specimens should be safeguarded in local museums from the risk of misappropriation; twenty

years ago in the church of Dinton, Bucks., two fifteenth-century battle helmets were lying about in an open box under the tower, and there was another on a window-ledge behind the altar at Buckland, Berks. All have now disappeared and nothing is known of their fate. They would each be worth £1,000 in the market to-day.

Stored in the church, too, was the great fire-hook with which fires were extinguished by the summary process of pulling down the burning house, which, as the ordinary cottage was of wattle and thatch, was both a necessary and a simple expedient for preventing the spread of a fire. A good many specimens remain, particularly in districts which having little building-stone continued to build with wattle and daub until recent times.

The parish coffin, in which the poorer parishioners were fetched from their cottages to the churchyard, was usually stored in the church, but sometimes like the sexton's tools to-day, in a shed outside; the churchwardens' accounts of St. Alphege, London Wall, for instance, record the purchase of 'a newe coffin for the use of the P'sch v^{s}. For making of a penthouse in the church yarde for the keeping drye of the said coffen vi^{s} viij^{d}'. Some had handles for carrying but most were laid upon the parish bier; Howden, Yorks., has a good specimen and there is another at Easingwold; Ridgewell in Essex has a medieval bier. When a body was chested, i.e. buried in a coffin, a higher burial fee was charged, perhaps because the grave was larger. An Act of Charles II for the encouragement of the woollen industry made burial in a woollen shroud compulsory,

the incumbent being required to certify in the burial register that the law had been complied with at every funeral.

Leominster church still has a specimen of the ducking stool, kept by each parish for the correction of scolds and disorderly women, a chair on a pair of wheels, fixed to a long pole, in which the offender was tied and run down to the village pond. The pillory too was sometimes stored in the church, and even the stocks when these were portable; in later times they were generally fixtures on the village green. Every church too had its whip and tongs with which the appointed functionary expelled stray dogs—which were very numerous before the age of licences: 'Payde to John Whetley for Rebukyng the dogges owt off the churche xii^{d},' is a typical entry in churchwardens' accounts. In the eighteenth century the dog-whipper sometimes received additional remuneration 'for his trouble and pains in wakening sleepers in ye church and keeping children quiet'. Baslow, Derbyshire, still preserves its dog whip, and Clodock, Herefordshire, its expanding tongs. Tall, narrow cupboards recessed in the nave walls were made for the storage of the staves of crosses and banners carried in the weekly procession.

XII. THE CHANCEL

IN ROMANESQUE architecture the nave, with its numerous secular associations, was shut off from the chancel by a wall pierced with a narrow arch, occasionally with smaller openings on either side of it as at Hinksey, Berks.; but the introduction of the loftier

pointed form led to the general use of chancel screens. These at first were of stone as at Balking, Berks., but

FIG. 58. Southern end of screen and rood-loft, Hanborough, *c.* 1480, showing door to rood-stair in south wall of aisle, conventional foliage and Tudor flower on the parapet of the rood-loft, and a typical Perpendicular respond or half-column.

Stanton Harcourt, near Oxford, has a thirteenth-century example of oak and there are a few, for instance, at Harwell, Berks., and Chinnor, Oxon., of fourteenth-century date. In the fifteenth century, the golden age

of wood-carving, the screen completely supplanted the chancel arch, and, with its rood, became the most striking feature of the church.

A platform, the rood-loft, was built upon it, approached by a winding stair, which, when built in the pier of a central tower, tended to weaken the whole structure. A better plan, often adopted, was to carry the screen and rood across nave and aisle, and to build the stair in a turret projecting from the outer wall (Fig. 58); occasionally an open stair was built in, or against, the inner side of the aisle wall. Though the lofts were almost all destroyed at the Reformation, the stairs with their doorways, and sometimes, as at Blewbury, Berks., their doors, remain; the door-arch, being invariably four-centred, suggests that the loft did not come into fashion until the late fourteenth century, though the presence of early piscinas in the wall above the chancel arch at Lambourne and Blewbury, Berks., Oddington, Oxon., and other churches, seems to prove that altars once existed in this elevated position, but how supported and approached is not known. The loft was often lighted by a window high up in the south wall of the nave; this, too, is almost invariably of Perpendicular date.

It is certain that before the coming of the screen and loft the rood from which both were named was in position above the chancel arch. At Bradford-on-Avon there are two carved angels in that position, who once watched the crucifix now vanished that stood between them. Set into the porch wall at Langford, Oxon., is a crucifix of Anglo-Saxon work which, it is probable, was once the rood over the eleventh-century arch of

the chancel. But when the screen came in, the crucifix, with its attendant figures of St. Mary and St. John, was carved in wood and set above it, backed by a painted tympanum of wood which filled the head of the arch; the roof above it also was sometimes ceiled and painted, or as at East Hendred, Berks., a canopy overhung it, which, however, may also have served as a sounding-board for the loft.

The term organ-loft, and the modern practice of placing the organ above the chancel arch, remind us that the original purpose of the rood-loft was to accommodate the organ and the soloists of the choir. At festivals the rood was decorated and numbers of candles were lit on the parapet of the loft, so that it came to be known as the candle-beam. During Lent the figures were veiled.

Pierced through the wall at the side of the chancel arch, on one or both sides, is the squint by means of which a sight of the high altar can be gained from the altar in the aisle or transept. When a chancel has been lengthened a second squint will usually be found, cut at a different angle, or the original one will show signs of enlargement. Most squints are without any ornamental treatment, but some late examples are traceried like a window, and may have been glazed. Their purpose probably was to enable the chantry priest to watch the celebration at the high altar, so as to begin his own service at the appropriate moment.

On the inner side of the screen, and facing the altar, and extending also along the side walls of the chancel, were stalls for the priests taking part in the service; where they now exist all but the 'return' or eastward

facing stalls are used by the choir, but in the Middle Ages there would often be chantry priests taking part in the service and assisting the incumbent. We know, from the will of a parishioner who bequeathed 'to every prest longyng to this church iii^{s} iiii^{d} that is to say Maister Priou^{r} S^{r} [1] Thomas Taylour, Sr Robert Thyrby, Sr Thomas Schelton, Sr Robert Walker', that there were at least five priests attached to Burford church in 1530.

The stalls have tip-up seats called misericords, like those of monastic and cathedral churches, and their carving is often amusing and always interesting. Neither seats nor desks were provided for the choir boys as a rule, though a few examples of seats are found, notably at Trunch, Norfolk. The earliest stalls remaining in a parish church are those at Kidlington, Oxon., of the thirteenth century; Great Budworth, Cheshire, and Hemingborough, Yorks., also have stalls of the Early English period. Fourteenth-century parochial stalls are rare, but fifteenth- and sixteenth-century examples are very common.

Under the westernmost window of the chancel, usually on the south side, but sometimes on the north, and occasionally on both, and, very rarely, in the wall near a side altar, is a smaller opening with rebated jambs showing that it was intended to be closed with a shutter, the bolt hole of which can usually be seen, though it may be concealed by the masonry that now often blocks the opening. This is the 'low side window' (Fig. 59) which continues to puzzle antiquaries in spite of the score or so of theories as to its original purpose.

[1] 'Sir', Latin *Dominus*, was the courtesy title given to priests who were not, as Masters of Arts, entitled to the style of 'Magister'.

Most of these are mere guesses without documentary evidence to support them, and the most popular, that the windows were leper-squints by means of which these unfortunates who were excluded from the church could

FIG. 59. A blocked low side window, Elsfield, *c.* 1200, showing a seat and book-rest in the sill and eastern jamb.

get sight of the sacrament of the altar, is quite untenable: they are never directed towards the altar, they are often difficult of access from outside—at Ely for instance, in Prior Crawden's chapel which has an undercroft, the opening is ten feet above the ground, and at Othery (Fig. 60) a buttress is built in front of it, through which a second opening has been cut, and, finally, lepers were strictly segregated in the Middle Ages, in lazar houses provided with their own chapels and priests, as lunatics are to-day.

DESCRIPTION OF PLATE VIII

One small Norman window yet remains to tell that the chancel wall dates from the twelfth century. The lancet close by is the sole survivor of a row inserted in the thirteenth century, to be in turn replaced by the existing windows in the fourteenth, when the south aisle was widened and the buttresses built. (That the aisle was widened is shown by the nave arches, which are contemporary with the lancet and were cut through twelfth-century walls in which traces of Norman windows remain above them (cf. Fig. 50), and by the Early English doorway (Fig. 22) of the north aisle.) The niche on the nave gable was for the sacring bell; that in the aisle buttress for the image of a saint. The tower and clearstory are Perpendicular additions, with which, as their pitch indicates, the roofs are contemporary. (A shield of arms on a roof-corbel suggests that we owe them to the Lord Camoys, commander at Agincourt, who acquired Milton by his marriage *c.* 1399 and died 1419.)

VIII. GREAT MILTON, OXON. FROM THE WEST

For one theory only is there any documentary evidence; in 1281 Archbishop Peckham ordered that 'In elevatione Corporis Domini pulsetur campana in uno

FIG. 60. Low side window, Othery, *c.* 1500, obscured by a buttress through which an opening has been cut, favouring the theory that a light, tended from outside, was set to scare spirits from the churchyard.

latere ut populares . . . seu in agris seu in domibus flectant genua', and it may be that a hand-bell was rung at these openings when there was no sacring bell in a turret on the roof above the chancel arch. In favour of this theory too is the existence in some examples of

a seat and, at Elsfield and Alvescot, Oxon., a book-rest (Fig. 59) in the splay of the window. The Alvescot example is specially interesting, having desks, like those of a music-lectern, at two levels, for standing and kneeling.

XIII. THE SANCTUARY

THE SEPARATION of the sanctuary from the choir by a rail became necessary after the destruction of screens, or their gates, at the Reformation. Wren's grandfather Bishop of Norwich, in 1636, ordered that 'a rayle be made before the Communion Table reaching Crosse from the North wall to the South wall, neere one yarde in height, so thick with pillars that dogges may not gett in'. Most existing examples are of the seventeenth century, the baluster-shaped pillars of the first half, the corkscrew forms of the second (Fig. 31).

The first Christian altar was, of course, the wooden table used at the Last Supper, and there is evidence that the early Christians, like the Greek Church to-day, used altars of wood. But they also celebrated the Eucharist at the tombs of saints and martyrs, using the stone coffin-lid as an altar; and ultimately this type became universal in western Europe. In Anglo-Saxon England both wood and stone were used, and though Lanfranc issued an edict against wooden altars they were still retained in a few churches; and, even when made of stone, the altar-slab was sometimes raised on legs like a table and not built up in the form of a sarcophagus.

Examples of both kinds are not rare—Arundel, alone, has four, and medieval altar-slabs are quite common,

though they have usually been reclaimed from other uses, having served even as floorstones, or as at Tewkesbury, to form seats in the porch. They may be known by the five crosses cut in the corners and the centre, at the spots anointed by the bishop who consecrated them with the holy oil. On the altar at Cookham, Berks., the crosses are of brass inlaid. The number is no doubt symbolical of the Five Wounds.

After the Reformation the altar was supplanted by the table, which, where Puritan theology prevailed, was of the ordinary domestic type, and, when in use, was moved[1] from the east end into the middle of the chancel —sometimes even into the nave, in order that communicants might stand, or even sit, round it in rows. Many Elizabethan examples remain and a much larger number of the Jacobean period. All have foot-rails, the purpose of which, in domestic tables, was to keep the feet clear of the often filthy, rush-strewn floor, and their legs are turned like a baluster shaft; but the earlier are the longer and lower, like the medieval altars, and their legs have great bulbous swellings like urns or melons, fluted and carved with scrolls or foliage of classic type; the later are much less elaborate, and by the end of the seventeenth century the communion table had become almost flimsy in construction. Baldon near Oxford has a Queen Anne example with a drawer, like a dressing table, now used as a writing table in the vestry. After the Restoration altars often had marble or stone tops, and many early Gothic revival altars are of stone—for instance, Ewelme, Oxon., and Christchurch, Cheltenham.

[1] The top was often detachable for convenience in moving.

The roof above the medieval altar was ceiled and painted to form a canopy. Where this remains, as at

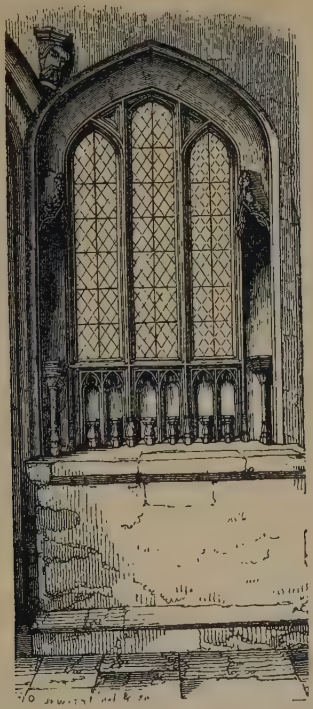


FIG. 61. Chantry altar, *c.* 1480, with reredos and niches, from which the images are gone; showing mullions without cusping or tracery, and the casement moulding round the four-centred arch.

Hendred, Berks., there may be seen the staple or pulley from which hung the pyx, containing the reserved

sacrament, covered with a veil or canopy of richly embroidered silk or linen of which a solitary example remains at Hesset in Suffolk. Three pyx canopies, emblematic of the highest use to which textiles could be put, were the medieval arms of the Drapers' company.

The great east window of stained glass, with brackets or niches for images on either side, formed the reredos to the altar, which was usually low so that there was generally room for a narrow band of carved and painted work between the altar and the sill (Fig. 61); the favourite subject was, appropriately, the twelve apostles, represented each under a canopy and holding their respective emblems. Scenes from the Passion are also frequent. After the middle of the fourteenth century reredos panels in ever increasing numbers were carved at Nottingham from alabaster quarried at Chellaston and exported to all parts of England. The figures shown on them are always dressed in the costume of Englishmen of the day, like the Greeks and Romans of the Elizabethan stage, not because the carver supposed that the High Priest's soldiers, for instance, wore plate armour, but because he was frankly ignorant of their equipment. His treatment of faces usually suggests some attempt to represent the typically Jewish nose and lips.

Sometimes a dorsal of embroidered stuff, corresponding to the altar-frontal, took the place of a reredos. Chipping Campden, Glos., has a pair of fourteenth-century date. Always there were embroidered side-curtains, 'riddels', screening the altar north and south and protecting its candles from draughts; their colour, and that of the frontals, varied with the seasons of the church.

During Lent the altar was hidden by a veil hung

in front of it by means of a cord, the staples or hooks for which may often be found in the chancel walls at a height of about eight feet. Chieveley, Berks., has a beam across the sanctuary to serve this purpose; Winchendon, Bucks., has brackets on which a beam once rested.

Every altar had its drain, the piscina, usually in an arched recess in the south wall, where the rinsings of the numerous ceremonial ablutions were poured away to sink into consecrated earth. The mouldings of the arch commonly declare the date of a piscina, which is sometimes earlier than the wall in which it has been reset. During the period covered by the lifetime of Edward I it was the custom to employ two drains, apparently in order to emphasize the sacredness of rinsings from the ablution of hands or vessels that had been in contact with the consecrated elements (Fig. 51). Above the drain is a shelf, or the grooves cut for one, on which the cruets of wine and water were set out; and in the north wall opposite, or, rarely, in the east wall, is the locker in which they were kept when not in use. The door is almost always gone—there is a unique example at Drayton, Berks., complete with lock and hinges of the thirteenth century, but the bolt-hole for the lock, the staples for the hinges, and the grooves for shelves commonly remain.

In the south wall of the sanctuary are seats, sedilia, where the celebrant and his assistants sat while the Creed and Gloria were sung. They are usually the most ornate feature in the chancel, and their date is therefore easily recognizable by their mouldings. The earlier sedilia are graded at three levels, for the officiating priest and the deacon and sub-deacon who assisted him;

but as the endowment of chantries provided most churches with several clergy in full orders the later sedilia are usually on one level.

Opposite, in the north wall, may be an arched recess or an altar tomb for the Easter Sepulchre, where on the evening of Good Friday an image of Christ with the Host, together with the altar-cross, was solemnly deposited, to be watched day and night until Easter morning, when it was brought out again with high festival. Usually the Easter Sepulchre was made of wood, so that its survival is rare; but the tomb on which it was placed or the recess in which it stood, being often the grave of a parishioner who had left money for its making, may be found in a large number of churches. The example which stands under Shakespeare's monument at Stratford will be familiar to every one.

On the north wall, too, may be a stone desk at which the Gospel was read at the Mass. A movable lectern was, however, more usual, and a considerable number, both of wood and metal, still survive to support the modern Bible in the nave. Less common are choir-lecterns for music books, with desks at two levels for standing and kneeling. There is a thirteenth-century example at East Hendred, Berks.

XIV. TOMBS AND MONUMENTS

AS THE kings of England were buried in the Abbey hard by their palace of Westminster so the lords of the manor had sepulture in the parish church. The rectors, too, were buried in their chancels. But with the rise

of a middle class that privilege was shared with other benefactors, and ultimately by any parishioner who was well enough off to pay for it. Few therefore could hope

FIG. 62.

FIG. 63.

FIG. 62. Effigy of William Longsword, 1220, showing hauberk and hose of chain mail, linen surcoat, prick-spurs, and long isosceles shield.
FIG. 63. Brass of Sir Thomas Peyton, Isleham, 1484, in Yorkist plate armour, showing glancing surfaces, heavy elbow-guards, sword slung in front, and short hair.

that their bones would lie long undisturbed by new arrivals; and in fact only those whose heirs could afford a massive tomb to mark and protect their resting-place were safe from the grave-diggers of the next generation.

Even a tomb gave but a limited immunity. Not one of Norman date remains in a parish church, and there are very few of the Early English period.

Early tombs rarely have inscriptions, but their period may be dated by their mouldings and other ornaments and by the costume of their effigies, above all by the head-dress and arrangement of the hair.

The earliest effigies are of stone or Purbeck marble, but after the thirteenth century they were also made, in ever-increasing numbers, of plates of latten imported from Cologne. These could be let into a ledger stone on the floor where a stone monument would have been in the way. The figure was cut out of the flat plate, lines representing the features and dress were engraved on it and filled in with coloured enamel, and it was then fitted into a matrix sunk to receive it in the grave-slab. The earliest existing 'brass' is that of Sir John Dabernon at Stoke Dabernon, Surrey, laid down in 1277. The engraving slowly but steadily deteriorated after the Black Death, and the figures grew ever smaller and more insignificant, until in the sixteenth century the whole effigies of a Reading alderman were cut out of the foot of a brass torn from the tomb of an early Lancastrian knight. The early brasses, like the stone effigies, were made for those who could afford to pay for good work; the later are mainly cheap substitutes provided for the new middle class.

Until the end of the fourteenth century men's hair, when visible, as in the effigies of priests and civilians, is curled and long (Figs. 76, 77); knights wear long thin moustaches and civilians beards, usually short and forked, the fashion familiar in the pictures of Chaucer. Early in

Fig. 64.

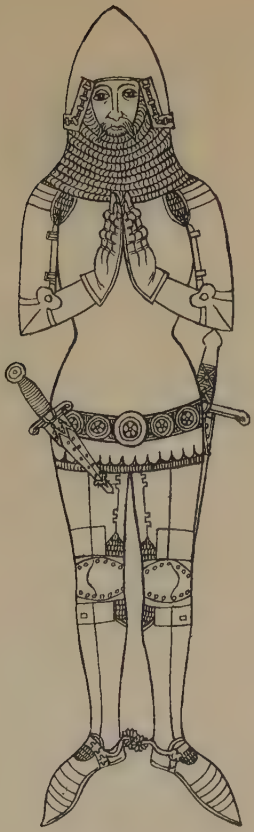


Fig. 65.

Fig. 64. Brass of Sir John de Creke, Westley Waterless, 1327, showing mail hauberk and chausses reinforced by plates of steel, linen cyclas cut away in front and exposing the pointed hauberk, steel cap over mail hood, and small heater-shaped shield.

Fig. 65. Brass of Sir John Cray, Chinnor, *c.* 1390, showing leather jupon covering a breast-plate and short mail shirt, plate armour on legs and arms, pointed bascinet with camail (= head-mail), sword, and dagger of mercy in horizontal belt.

the Lancastrian period beards went out of fashion, and the hair was cut closer to the head, and in front presented a formal outline of three curves on forehead and temples somewhat suggesting a wig (Fig. 73). This fashion gave place in the middle of the century to an uglier one in which the short hair is brushed up above the forehead and ears so that effigies of this date appear to be wearing skull-caps (Fig. 63). Late in the Yorkist period it was allowed to grow long again, and was 'bobbed' at the shoulders and cut square across the forehead like a modern girl's (Figs. 67, 69). This fashion prevailed also under the early Tudors. The great majority of male effigies, however, show men in armour. This, until the beginning of the fourteenth century, was of flexible mail composed of small steel rings, and consisted of a pair of long hose reaching well above the knee, overlapped by a long, hooded shirt, the hauberk (Fig. 62). Towards the middle of the thirteenth century the hose were shortened, mail 'shorts' were substituted for their upper portions, and the knee, the most vulnerable part of a horseman, was protected by a shaped leather cap. All through the thirteenth century a long surcoat of linen, like a sleeveless night-shirt slit at the tails, was worn over the mail to protect it from moisture. The legs of effigies of this period are usually crossed, but the posture has no relation to the Crusades; it is merely an artistic device to show to advantage the lines of the figure.

In the reign of Edward II plates of steel on the arms and shins were strapped over the mail for additional protection, and the hauberk and the front of the surcoat were shortened (Fig. 64). By the middle of the century a breast-plate had been added, worn under a leather

Fig. 66. Sir Simon Felbrygge and wife, Felbrigg, 1416. He wears complete plate armour of the Lancastrian period, with gorget, breast-plate, and skirt of taces with diagonal belt. She wears the crespine head-dress, close-fitting sleeves, and a mantle.

jupon, a short, sleeveless coat, in place of the linen surcoat. The mail hood had given place to a pointed steel cap, the bascinet, but a fringe of mail still hung from its lower edge to protect the neck and throat. Rowelled spurs took the place of the single-pointed prick-spur of the surcoat period (Fig. 62), and a dagger was added in the sword belt to dispatch a fallen enemy (Fig. 65).

This, the camail stage, lasted until the Lancastrian period, when mail was entirely superseded, except at the armpits, by complete armour of plate (Fig. 66), which grew heavier and more elaborate till in the Wars of the Roses, 'it is a safe assertion to make that a full suit of plate armour is the most perfect work of craftsmanship that exists'. It had shoulder-plates and elbow-guards fluted with glancing surfaces to deflect a lance or sword-thrust, was graduated in thickness, and lighter on the sword-arm side so as to allow of freer movement. This armour of proof made shields superfluous; the presence or absence of a shield may almost be taken as evidence that the date of an effigy is before or after the close of the fourteenth century. From about 1450 onwards the knight's head is usually bare, and during the Wars of the Roses his sword is slung in front instead of at the side (Fig. 63).

In the third quarter of the century mail reappeared, first at the throat, to replace the heavy steel gorget, and later in the form of a skirt from the waist to a little above the knee. Tuilles, jointed plates of steel, hung above the skirt, were added in the Tudor period to protect the front of the thigh (Fig. 67). The ugly bulbous-toed sabbatons of this period are in marked

Fig. 67. Brass of William, Viscount Beaumont, Wyvenhoe, 1507, showing mail skirt with tuilles, mail gorget, round-toed sabbatons, and bobbed hair.

contrast to the long-pointed sollerets of the earlier part of the century (Figs. 63, 66, 67).

In the Yorkist and still more in the early Tudor period a tabard of arms, i.e. a kind of painted surplice with wide short sleeves, still worn by heralds, was frequently worn over the armour. Ladies usually at this date, and occasionally in earlier periods, also bore their own and their husbands' arms on their kirtles and mantles (Figs. 72, 75).

The sleeves of ladies and civilians afford a simple and trustworthy indication of their century; in the fourteenth century they were close-fitting, and often buttoned all up the forearm (Fig. 71); in the fifteenth century they were loose and baggy, and were drawn in at the wrist like a bishop's lawn sleeves (Fig. 73); in the sixteenth they had broad cuffs of fur (Fig. 75).

The effigies of ladies may be most readily and closely dated by the style of the head-dress. The earliest, of the surcoat and mail period, wear a coverchef of linen descending to the shoulders, and a wimple or gorget hiding the throat and chin, like the head-dress still worn by nuns (Fig. 74). During the camail period, the last half of the fourteenth century, the hair is shown squarely framing the forehead and cheeks and appearing to be closely confined in a sort of frilled cap, coming down over the ears, like a Victorian baby's (Fig. 71). Of this head-dress there are two varieties, in one, the 'nebuly', the frills show wavy lines, in the other, the 'zigzag', the lines run chevron-wise. Widows continued to wear 'nun's veiling'; unmarried girls at all periods wore the hair loose and flowing down the back.

Head-dresses of the fifteenth century are much more impressive and elaborate creations. They are of gauze

Fig. 68.

Fig. 69.

Fig. 68. Heart-shaped head-dress, mid-fifteenth century.
Fig. 69. Bench-ends, Stanton St. John, *c.* 1500, showing hair bobbed in early Tudor fashion.

Fig. 70. Crespine head-dress, Lancastrian period.

spread upon a wire framework, forming 'horns', either horizontal as in the 'crespine' of early Lancastrian date (Figs. 66, 70), or upcurved as in the 'mitre' or 'heart-shaped' head-dress of the middle of the century (Fig. 68).

In the Yorkist period the framework grew still larger to form the spreading 'butterfly' head-dress (Fig. 72), in

Fig. 71.

Fig. 72.

Fig. 71. The zig-zag head-dress of the mid-fourteenth century.
Fig. 72. Margaret Peyton, from a window at Long Melford, *c.* 1485, showing the butterfly head-dress. She bears her husband's arms on her mantle and her father's (Barnard) on her kirtle.

which the hair, brushed back from the forehead, was completely hidden.

With the Tudors the 'pedimental' or 'kennel' head-dress came into fashion, so called because it resembled, with its peaked front and side-lappets, a gable end or the front of a dog-kennel (Fig. 75). It gave place to the more becoming Paris head-dress, well-known in the pictures of Mary Queen of Scots.

It is not necessary to speak of the effigies of later periods, since their costume and dates will be recog-

FIG. 73. Fifteenth-century civilian dress, showing short hair, baggy sleeves, belt, and acutely pointed toes.

nizable from the pictures of Holbein, Van Dyck, and later painters. Moreover they are almost invariably accompanied by dated inscriptions.

Fig. 74.

Fig. 75.

Fig. 74. Thirteenth-century women's dress contemporary with the surcoat and mail of Fig. 62.

Fig. 75. Brass of Elizabeth Shelley, Clapham, 1526, showing pedimental head-dress, furred sleeves, and long chain with pomander. Her mantle bears the arms of Shelley and Michelgrove.

As Perpendicular work, though easily recognizable as such, is very difficult to date within fifty years, the details of sculptured figures are of great value in arriving

at a closer approximation. A horned head-dress on a carved corbel for example, as at Turkdean in the Cotswold, enables us to fix the date of the doorway as mid-fifteenth century; while the long, straight, squarely bobbed hair of the carved heads on the bench-ends at Stanton St. John, Oxon., shows their date to be early Tudor (Fig. 69).

From a very large number of tombs the brasses have been torn away; the indents in the matrix, however, almost always give a clue to the period. The lettering of the inscriptions, for example, until the middle of Edward III's reign, was of the kind known as Lombardic, full of curved forms; and each letter was set in an indent of its own (Fig. 77). By 1370 black-letter had come into general use (Fig. 66), every letter of which was formed of straight strokes, and the inscription was cut upon long strips of brass laid in a continuous indent. A single letter is therefore enough to determine whether a grave-slab or a fragment of stained glass is of early or later work. So the indent of a mailed coif, or of a pointed camailed bascinet or of a pedimental head-dress, will be unmistakable even though the brass itself has gone. A pair of roughly oblong indents, once containing plates engraved with kneeling figures of sons and daughters at the foot of the slab, will show it to be of the Yorkist or Tudor periods, when such representations of the survivors usually accompanied the effigies of the dead; Lancastrian examples exist, but are very rare.

The language of inscriptions varies with the date and subject of the monument. For priests Latin is the invariable rule at all dates until modern times. For the laity Norman-French was usual until the Hundred

Years War led to its abandonment; the conventional inscription on grave-slabs of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is

> Sire : A — : de : B — : gist : icy : Deu : de : sa : alme : eit : merci :
> 'Sir A. B. lies here; may God have mercy on his soul.'

Towards the end of the fourteenth century, when black-letter superseded the Lombardic forms, Latin became general, but gradually gave place to English throughout the following century. The conventional form was

> Hic jacet Dominus A. B. cujus anime propicietur Deus. Amen.
> 'Here lies Sir A. B. on whose soul may God have mercy.'

But the words are almost invariably abbreviated, e.g. dn̄s, an̄e, aīe, p̄r.

The earliest inscription in English is on a brass at Brightwell Baldwin, Oxon., of about 1370;[1] it is also the earliest illustration of a practice which in the next century became popular, of supplementing the epitaph by posthumous admonition to the living:

> 'Man com and se: how schal alle dede be: wen yow comes bad and bare: noth hab ven ve away fare: All ys werines y^t ve for care: Bot y^t ve do for godyslaf we have nothyng yare. Hundyr yis grave lys John ye smyth: God yif hys soule heven grit.'

This kind of thing was afterwards supplied by the tomb-makers, as mortuary verses are by undertakers

[1] English was first used in the Law Courts in 1362, and in Parliament in 1363.

on mourning cards to-day. Stow in his *Survey* records an inscription on the tomb of John Shrow stockfishmonger in St. Michael's, Candlewick St., which is to be found also on a brass at Northleach, Glos. As a rare example of moving rhythm on a gravestone it is worth quoting.

> Farewell my frends the tyde abydeth no man
> I am departed hence and so shall ye
> But in this passage the best songe that I can
> Is requiem eternam now Jhu graunte it me
> Whan I have ended all myn adversite
> Graunte me in paradise to have a mansion
> That shed thy blode for my redemption.

Inscriptions tended to grow longer and less religious in tone all through the Tudor and Stuart periods until, in the eighteenth century, we find it asserted at the end of a long eulogy of the squire of Northleigh, Oxon., that his appearance in heaven 'exhilarabit civitatem Dei'. But even the eighteenth century could sometimes be laconic; an epitaph at Tetbury states, with a fine economy of phrasing,

> 'Near this place lie several of the Sanderses;
> the Last Day will disclose particulars.'

XV. WALL-PAINTINGS AND PAINTED GLASS

OF ALL the dismal mutations that have befallen our ancient churches the loss of their colouring is the most lamentable and the most complete. All that we now see in the most perfect church is but the frame and the

background of a picture that has perished. Where, as at Fairford, the stained glass has been miraculously preserved it is only as a jewel taken out of its setting, for it was originally part of a colour-scheme that included all the interior, the walls, the splays of the windows, the pillars, the roof, the screens, even the floor, which was bright with parti-coloured tiles.

Every inch of woodwork and stone was covered with a prepared surface of gesso or plaster to which gold-leaf or paint could be applied. The smaller surfaces were treated decoratively, the larger pictorially. Above and around the chancel arch was a great picture of the Doom, showing the resurrection of the dead, the last judgement, and the fate of the just and the unjust, angels carrying some to heaven where Christ sat enthroned, and devils dragging others into the mouth of hell, represented by the open jaws of a nightmare monster. Another picture showed St. Michael weighing a soul in the balance, with our Lady standing by in prayer, and a demon trying to drag down the other scale. Elsewhere St. George fought the dragon, and the giant St. Christopher forded a stream carrying the Infant Christ—he was usually set to face the main entrance, for he was the patron of travellers and it was believed that those who looked on him were safe from death that day.

Though the Middle Ages were not so illiterate as is commonly supposed, they learned more from pictures than from books, and they certainly knew more of the Bible story than the average teacher in a modern Sunday school.

At the Reformation all this colour-work was covered

with whitewash upon which texts were inscribed in black-letter. Where the walls have not been scraped bare by later and more thorough reformers traces of colour may sometimes be seen under the wash. Among them search should be made for the twelve consecration crosses that mark the spots anointed by the bishop at the dedication ceremony when the building was first consecrated for worship. They are enclosed in circles of usually about twelve inches in diameter, and were made by striking segments of other circles with the same radius from points on the circumference of the first, in the manner familiar to every child who has played with a pair of compasses. In order that passers-by should not brush against them they were set at seven or eight feet from the floor level, a short ladder being therefore provided for the bishop to reach them at their anointing. There were twelve others on the outside walls;[1] they were sometimes of latten let into circular panels, of which an almost complete set of the early thirteenth century may be seen at Uffington, Berks., showing the rivet-holes of the vanished crosses. Other holes above or below the cross were made for the fixing of the branch to hold the candle which burnt before the cross at the time of consecration and on the anniversary of that day.

Small crosses roughly scratched or outlined in dots on the jambs of doorways are often supposed to have been cut in witness to vows; it is, however, probable that some of them were cut to scare away evil spirits and prevent them from crossing the threshold.

[1] External consecration crosses were peculiar to the English rites.

Remains of medieval glass are more numerous but also more fragmentary than those of the wall-paintings. The difficulty of dating them has usually been com-

FIG. 76. Thirteenth-century glass, Wilton, in which every piece separately leaded is of a single colour. Coloured glass of this period is often formed into medallions, oblong, circular, or pointed-oval, set in clear glass in lancet lights.

plicated by the nineteenth-century practice of collecting fragments of all dates for preservation in a single window. In the smaller openings high up in the tracery, however, pieces may often be found in situ

Fig. 77. Fourteenth-century glass, Stanford, showing St. Peter. The leading is less obtrusive, the pieces larger, and much of the detail is painted in yellow stain. The figure shows the 's' curve, the foliage is naturalistic, and the lettering Lombardic.

and may then be approximately dated from the style of the stonework, as in the Lady Chapel of St. Peter's, Oxford. Details of armour and costume, corresponding with those of effigies of known date, will also serve to fix the period of any figures that may be represented. The form of the episcopal mitre is a particularly useful guide: until the fourteenth century it was a low cap with a right-angled point. Afterwards it grew steadily taller and more curved: in Tudor times it was crocketed on the edges. The size of the principal figures also gives a useful indication; the kings and bishops in the late twelfth-century glass at Dorchester, Oxon., are only about ten inches tall; those of the thirteenth century are usually twice that height, and those of the Perpendicular period may be three feet high or more. Pedestals supporting the figures were introduced late in the fourteenth century. Figures of the Edwardian age rarely stand erect, but have the sinuous lines of the curve of an 's' (Fig. 77). In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries canopy-work filled a large part of a window and, as it reproduced the contemporary tracery, its period is easily known. Naturalistic foliage, in glass as in stonework, marks the craftsmanship of the fourteenth century (Fig. 78). The royal arms too, a very usual part of the design, will frequently enable us to date other fragments associated with them. Until 1340, when Edward III claimed the French throne, the English kings bore only the three gold leopards on a red shield, first assumed by Richard I. After that date they quartered the arms of France, i.e. divided the shield into four and set their leopards in two of the quarters and the golden fleurs-de-lis of France on a blue ground in the other two; a quartered

Fig. 78. Early fourteenth-century glass showing naturalistic foliage.

shield may be safely assigned to a date not earlier than the reign of Edward II.[1] The fleurs-de-lis at first were powdered all over the blue, but soon after 1400 were reduced to three. With the Stuarts the red lion of Scotland and the Irish harp came into the royal arms. The king's badge often accompanied the shield; the blazing sun of York, for example, remains in the upper lights of a great number of windows, and dates the glass as belonging to the period 1461–85; so the triple-turreted castle of Castile is found in windows of the reigns of the first two Edwards. The shape of the shield usually gives a clue to its date: the earliest are isosceles, long and acutely pointed; those of the fourteenth century are equilateral; the later are often fantastic in outline and roughly rectangular, so as to allow space for quarterings at the base, for by this time the display of heraldry was the only function of the shield.

The study of glass dated by these and other means (documentary evidence in the case of York Minster for example, and actually dated windows at Merton College), has shown that the technique of glass-making, like that of architecture, falls into well-defined stages, the dates of which practically correspond with those of the Early English, Decorated and Perpendicular periods of Gothic.

Throughout the Middle Ages all pictures and patterns in glass were formed, like a tesselated pavement of mosaic work, by fitting together small pieces of glass of various shapes and colours—a piece of yellow to make a crown, of brown or white for a face, of ruby

[1] With the exception of the lion and castle quartered in the arms of Edward the First's queen.

for a cloak, blue for a robe, and so on. Shadows and lines for details like the eyes and noses of faces or the fingers of hands were obtained by means of opaque enamel put on with a brush and afterwards heated until it fused upon the surface of the glass. The windows were designed in England, but the glass itself, except a certain amount of white or clear glass manufactured at Chiddingfold and in the Chilterns, was made on the Rhine and on the Seine and imported mainly from Antwerp and Rouen.

The first modification of the purely mosaic method was due to the discovery, very early in the fourteenth century, that white glass could be stained yellow by means of silver nitrate painted on it and heated, so that, for example, a face, hair, crown, and halo, could all be shown upon a single piece of glass. The discovery so simplified and reduced the labour of picture-making that painted windows, previously found only in a few churches, became usual in every village throughout the Perpendicular period. Henceforward the pieces forming the mosaic and the figures represented grew alike gradually larger, and the leadwork bands less and less obtrusive until, in the middle of the sixteenth century, the mosaic method was abandoned and pictures were made on sheets of glass by painting upon them in enamel, as an artist paints on canvas.

Glass, like the walls themselves, tended to grow thinner through the successive centuries. The early glass, of the thirteenth century, is very thick and opaque; unless held to the light it might be mistaken for roughly glazed pottery. It was found impossible to make a translucent red and therefore white glass

with a film of ruby was used. In the fifteenth century it became a common practice to grind or chip away the ruby 'flash' to any shape required and to stain the exposed white surface with silver nitrate. The golden leopards of England were often set in their red field by this simple means.

Windows should be examined from without as well as from within; most ancient glass shows externally the effect of wind and rain in the corrosion of its surface to a greater or less degree, which is not, however, proportional to its age. Mr. Le Couteur states that corrosion is most noticeable in the glass made in the two or three generations following the Black Death, and suggests that it was due to the shortage of competent workmen.

Since the diamond was not used by glaziers until the seventeenth century, glass cut before that date may be distinguished by its rough edges, caused by the tools with which it was snipped into shape.

On the merits of the glass of the various periods opinions differ. The earlier is more brilliant in colouring; for its very defects, its unequal thickness, and its streakiness, by breaking up the light caused it to sparkle. But its figures were crude and grotesque, with fingers like talons and toes like fingers (Fig. 76). Not until the fifteenth century do we get anything like a portrait in painted glass; naturalness in the human features is therefore as sure a mark of Perpendicular glass as naturalistic foliage is of that of the previous century (Fig. 78). The artists of the Perpendicular period had no doubts of the superiority of their own work, for they rarely, if ever, transferred the older glass to any new windows that they might build.

FIG. 79. Fifteenth-century glass, Woodmansterne, showing realistic treatment of the figure but conventionalized floral ornament. Black-letter inscription.

XVI. THE PAROCHIAL RECORDS

EVERY church had its great chest, for the preservation of its churchwardens' accounts, of the wills of the parishioners—in which the church was often interested and which, as a rubric in the Prayer Book (visitation of the sick) reminds us, were usually made with the advice and at the admonition of the priest, and, after the Reformation, of the parish registers and the books of Protestant doctrine which every parish had to provide; these last formed the nucleus of the parish library which most churches seem to have possessed in the sixteenth century, and of which they have been despoiled. Denchworth, Berks., kept its copy of the *Golden Legend*, printed by Caxton, until 1853, when the vicar sold it to a dealer for £20. It is now in the Bodleian. Buckland and Sutton in the same county still have a large number of ill-cared-for books printed in the seventeenth century. There must also have been still larger chests for the storage of vestments, like those which still remain in some of the cathedrals; for the memorial effigies of priests invariably show them vested in rich and elaborate garments, often in great processional copes, which could not be folded small. In Aylesbury parish church is a medieval vestment-cupboard with hanging frames that swing outwards. English church-embroidery, *opus Anglicanum*, was famous throughout Christendom. At the Reformation vast quantities of it were sold and pulled to pieces for the sake of the gold and jewels with which it was enriched. Yet a good many churches still possess an

altar frontal or a pulpit cloth made from a medieval cope, and such fragments give us some faint idea of the splendour in which even the humblest parish-priest was

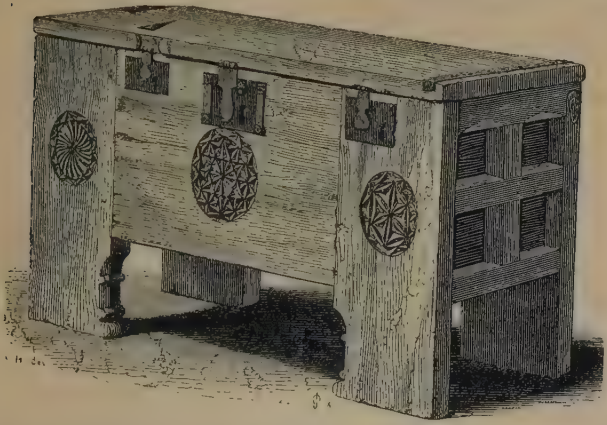


FIG. 80. Thirteenth-century chest, Stoke d'Abernon, showing sunk roundels.

arrayed; not Solomon in all his glory painted on the walls, nor popes and apostles in the glass of the windows, could have compared with him in magnificence of colour.

Chests of every date remain from the twelfth century downwards. The earliest are made by hollowing out a great oak-log; these are often called dug-outs. Those of the Early English period (Fig. 80) may usually be known by their scrolled iron-work, by carved roundels sunk on their faces, and by the absence of iron hinges, those of the Decorated period (Fig. 81) by their elaborate carving or by their heavily banded iron-

work; and those of late Gothic date by their linen-fold panelling (Fig. 82). But at all dates, plain unornamented chests were common, and only the expert can decide their period.

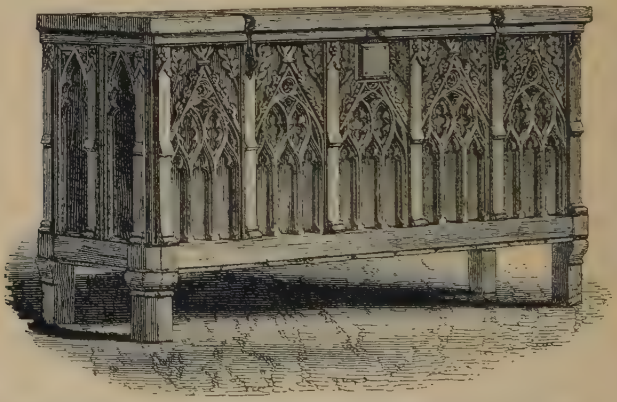


FIG. 81. Fourteenth-century chest, Huttoft, showing panels reproducing the Decorated tracery of contemporary windows.

Of the documents once stored in them a small proportion yet remain; and though now for the most part kept in safes they are still very much at the mercy of a careless incumbent. Very few churches are fortunate enough to have kept a set of registers complete since Henry VIII's Vicar-General in 1538 ordered that every parish priest should 'kepe one boke or registere wherein ye shall write the day and yere of every weddyng, christenyng and buryeng . . . And shall there insert every persons name that shalbe so weddid christened or buried'. The motive behind the order was the imposition of a tax on these sacraments, but the

idea provoked so much indignation that it was abandoned. Registration, however, went on; and in 1593 Convocation ordered that all entries should be on parchment, on which earlier registers of paper should be copied,

FIG. 82. Linen-fold panel of early Tudor date.

and that duplicates of future entries should be deposited in the diocesan archives. So it happens that we know the date of Shakespeare's christening from the parchment copy at Stratford, and that the records of many parishes which have lost their early registers can be consulted at the diocesan office.

Besides the names of past generations the registers often contain entries of the highest interest to the student of social conditions. A certain number have been printed and so made accessible, and, which is more important, safe from destruction, by various archaeological societies, but the vast majority of these valuable records are still uncopied. If our millionaires were not, for the most part, bookless materialists, and our cabinet ministers mere politicians, all our parishes would have

printed copies of their records, and the originals would be in safe keeping at the Record Office.

Like the registers the parish accounts survive only in a fragmentary state. The office of churchwarden is as old as most of our Norman churches, having been instituted by the Council of London in 1127. But the oldest set of accounts, those of St. Michael's church, Bath, begin only in 1349. A few other parishes have churchwardens' accounts dating from the fourteenth century but none of them has an unbroken series. Those of St. Lawrence, Reading, and of All Saints, Bristol, however, are practically complete since the beginning of the fifteenth century.

The original duties of the wardens were to raise and to administer the funds necessary for the upkeep of the church fabric and its services, and to prosecute offenders against ecclesiastical law, adulterers, sabbath-breakers, and swearers, for example. After the Reformation many purely civil duties were imposed on them, the provision of arms for the militia, the relief of maimed soldiers, the provision of pounds, stocks, and pillories, and the destruction of vermin.

Their accounts of receipts and expenditure show that the churchwarden must have been incomparably the busiest man in the parish. He had to collect the rents of lands and houses left to the church, to farm the church stock of sheep and cattle which those who had no freehold land often bequeathed instead, to sell wool and cheese and other gifts in kind, which he had also to gather in a house-to-house collection, to organize 'church ales', saint's day revels, when ale brewed in the church in the parish utensils was sold and consumed there by

the holiday-making parishioners—for it was against the canon to work on a Holy Day. His disbursements of the funds so raised were equally varied, and included, of course, the payment 'for makyng clene of the Church agaynst the day of drynking in the seid Church', which at St. Lawrence's, Reading, in 1506 amounted to 4*d.*, while the 'mete and drynke' consumed by the Taberer on the same occasion cost 9*d.*

Our churchwardens' accounts are the most valuable of all sources for the student of economic history, containing, as they do, information as to wages and prices of almost every kind of commodity since the fourteenth century. Space forbids illustration here, for the entries are so varied that any quotations to be at all representative must be numerous. But considerable numbers have been printed and are thus easily accessible. To those who wish to get a general idea of their contents, the admirable *Churchwardens' Accounts*, by Dr. Cox, in Methuen's Antiquary's Books, can be unreservedly commended.

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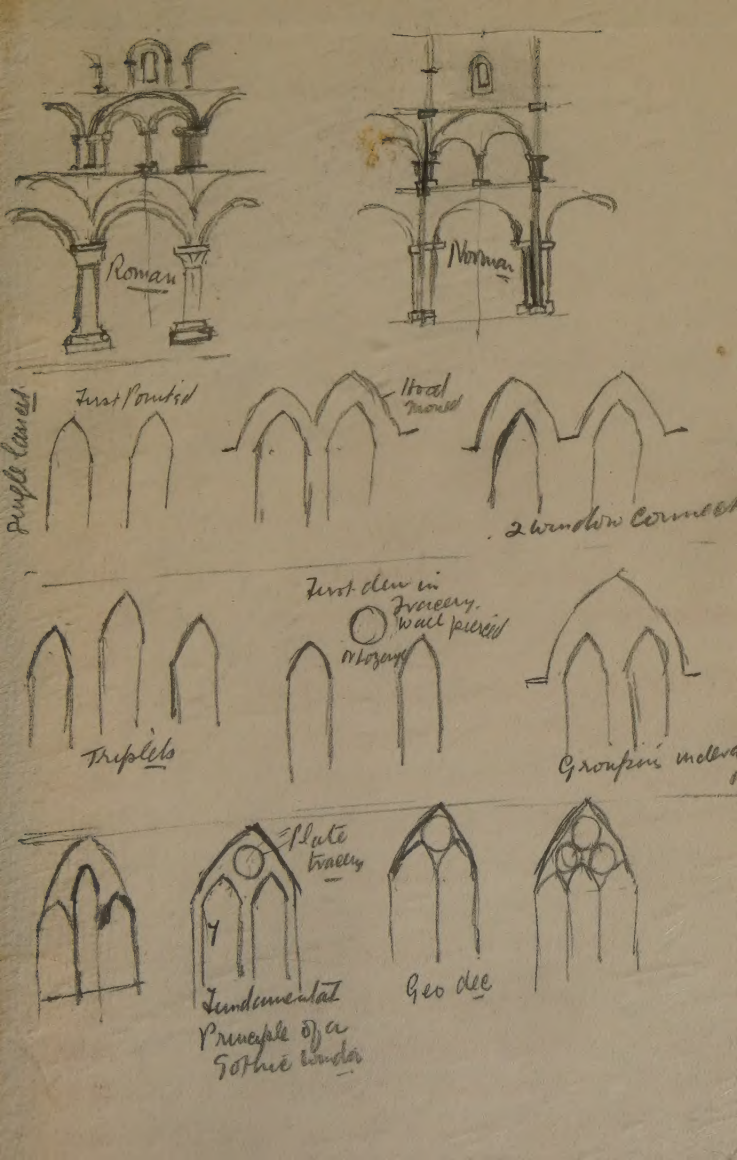
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